Week ending February 19 1955
Every Wednesday Fourpence

JOHN BULL

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NEVIL SHUTE

BY ROWNTREES

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EDITORIAL

Mind murder

SOME of Britain's best young brains are being wasted. Far too many clever children are leaving school too soon. The government is worried, for the future depends on the brains of the British. The teachers are worried—and despondent—at seeing their best material wasted.

Here is the view of a typical grammar school headmaster, Mr. Donald Bruce Gaskin, of Henry Thornton School, Clapham:

"Anyone who watches, as I do, the transformation of a boy, who at fifteen is awkward, callow and irresponsible, into a sensible, self-reliant young man of eighteen, realizes that his last two or three years at school alter his whole life for the better."

RECENTLY the Education Advisory Council reported that, in 1953, about ten thousand boys and girls who could have taken advanced sixth-form courses, instead left school at the age of fifteen or sixteen.

MR. DONALD GASKIN
"The last three years count most"

Why did these young people reject the most valuable years of the education that was offered to them? Some came from poor families, and were influenced by their parents; the tradition that children should earn money for the family as soon as possible dies hard.

But most of these youngsters left school by their own wish. Only one in ten of the five thousand boys told his headmaster that he must leave school because of poverty at home. Five out of ten had been offered good jobs, or wanted independence. They said that crowded homes made homework difficult. And the boys envied their friends who, with easily earned money, were cutting a dash with the girls.

MR. GASKIN confirms that. "Several times this term, boys have said to me: 'My friends are in jobs, and I can't afford to go to the pictures with them.' Yet I know how often, when it is too late, boys regret leaving school early—and how seldom they regret staying on. It is often from the boys themselves, not their parents, that the pressure comes."

How can these ten thousand extra-clever brains a year be saved for industry, science and the arts? The Council suggests bigger grants, family allowances throughout schooldays, easier late entry to trades and professions.

But the real responsibility is with the parents. They must understand that for a brilliant boy or girl to leave school too soon is "mind murder." It is their job to guide and advise their children.

Modern Britain cannot afford to put on to errand-boys' bicycles the fifteen-year-olds who ought to be her scientists and managers ten years later.

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"She'll soon be up and about again!"...

It's a tragedy when mother's ill — but her illness can be so much shorter if Lucozade is there to help. Lucozade contains Glucose to provide energy when it's needed most, rallying the sick and speeding the convalescent. And how acceptable it is! The sparkling Lucozade flavour stimulates the appetite and makes it acceptable even in cases of extreme exhaustion. But don't wait for winter illnesses, help to protect yourself and your family by keeping really fit. Have some Lucozade in your home — and ask for it wherever you go. *Used by Doctors and Nurses in Hospitals, Clinics and Schools.*

We receive letters like this every week

It's a wise housewife who keeps some Lucozade in the house — and here's a letter from one: "*I had an operation ten weeks ago and for a month after I came out of hospital I felt like nothing on earth . . . Then one day my husband brought home a bottle of Lucozade and from the first bottle I felt better.*"

Mrs. Gladys Summers, Forest Hill, London.

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Chilly job: *Mr. Yewlett is a planning engineer. His job takes him out in all weathers. "Bovril sees me through," he says.*

"Mine's a Bovril family all right!"

says Mrs. Yewlett of Penarth.

"I THINK Bovril's so good the children often have it instead of soup," says Mrs. Yewlett, of Lavernock Road, Penarth. The children are: Christopher, 7, sturdy, fair-haired, and Patrick, 4—"just at the age when he's trying to keep up with his big brother."

Keen swimmer! *Christopher, sturdy 7-year-old, likes a dip in the Bristol Channel—a few minutes walk from home. "I see he doesn't shiver for long afterwards" says Mrs. Yewlett. "I give him hot Bovril."*

Head of the family, Mr. Yewlett, is a man with a cold job. He's a planning engineer, spends a great deal of time out of doors, supervising cable-laying. How does he get the warmth back in his bones? "With hot Bovril," he says.

Is yours a Bovril family? All over England you'll find families who thrive on Bovril. In the cold of winter there's no better protection. Bovril makes a delicious warming drink. It gives an appetite. It is invaluable in the case of illness. Keep some by you always!

We're jolly well taking daily BOVRIL

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82

JOHN BULL 189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1

FEB. 19 1955 VOL. 97 NO. 2538 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

A wife wears her best to go shopping

WHEN my husband came back from a business trip to the U.S.A. last month, he was full of admiration for American housewives.

What impressed him was their dress, particularly when they go shopping in the morning—they take trouble over their grooming, wear new clothes and careful make-up.

In the States, a well-dressed wife means a successful husband, and American women like to be proud of the achievements of their menfolk.

I detected a faint reproach in my husband's voice; he is fairly successful, but I must admit that you wouldn't think it to look at me in the mornings. Like my friends, I do my shopping in an old coat, comfortable shoes and very little make-up.

"Perhaps I do let you down a bit," I told him. "Tomorrow, I'll copy the Americans."

The result startled us both. Judging by my friends' remarks when they saw me shopping in my new spring outfit, most of them thought that we were going broke—and that I was trying to hide it.

But the effect on the shopkeepers was spectacular. I've never had such charming, courteous service since we've been married.—MRS. K. MILLER, Bath.

Sailor Beware

THE shopkeeper's use of a "wet paint" notice to stop customers leaning bicycles against his window ("Free Speech," January 29), reminded me of the Royal Navy's method of keeping curious hands off wet paint.

When painting has been in progress aboard ship, the usual "wet paint" sign is often accompanied by another board. On this there is a splash of

paint and the instruction to "test here." It is for the benefit of people who must see for themselves if the paint is, in fact, wet, and it reduces to a minimum the number of fingerprints they would otherwise leave on painted surfaces.—C. J. OLIVER, P.O.s' Mess, H.M.S. Mercury.

Northern Pioneer

KEITH ELLIS'S article on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (JOHN BULL, January 29) was very interesting, but I think he has one fact wrong.

He says that the R.C.M.P. patrol boat St. Roch became, in 1942, the first vessel ever to negotiate the North West Passage. Surely Roald Amundsen, in his sloop Gjöa, accomplished this nearly forty years earlier?—W. IVOR DUNN, Stourbridge, Worcs.

Amundsen, discoverer of the South Pole, set out to negotiate the North West Passage, the sea route from the Atlantic to the Pacific through the Arctic Seas, in 1903. In August, 1905 he reached Nelson Head on Banks Island, and there he met a vessel from the Pacific. Amundsen then realized he had opened the North West Passage. The sea area south of Banks Island was afterwards named Amundsen Gulf.

Seasonal Greeting

I SEE that the seaside resorts are once again nagging us to choose early holidays. We took their advice last year and went to a south coast resort in May.

There were no extra trains, so ours was packed with business people going home for the weekend; the beach tea-shops were closed; the children's roundabouts were still in winter storage, and as steps down from the promenade to the beach had not been erected for the season we had to walk nearly a mile before we could find a safe way of getting to the sands.

Early holidays? Never again.—MRS. P. BURTON, Arlington Close, Sidcup, Kent.

Wait For It

YOUR reader who found too much salt for her taste in English bacon ("Free Speech," January 29), blames the producer. In fact, the flavour of the bacon is more the responsibility of the curer.

I have cured many of our own pigs and have achieved the same delicious flavour as Danish curers. Much of the English bacon we see in the shops looks as if it has not been given enough time to dry and mature after coming out of the brine. It should be allowed three or four weeks to reach the proper matured condition and the full flavour.—MRS. M. SMITH, Springfield Farm, Halifax.

First Innings

AN Australian newspaper I received recently contained an extraordinary account of the origin of cricket. The writer, who said a Lake District clergyman told him the tale, thinks modern cricket may be derived from a game called "cryce" played by monks in the Middle Ages.

Three sticks were planted in the ground to represent the Holy Trinity. This "wicket" was guarded by eleven monks in turn—representing the faithful apostles. Armed with sticks, they defended the Kingdom of Heaven against the devil—another monk who "bowled" a wooden ball at the stumps.—A. L. PARSONS, Whitesmocks Avenue, Durham.

Canon W. E. Bradley, a former vicar

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

NEXT WEEK IN JOHN BULL

Harry Hopkins visits

PLYMOUTH

the city of pioneers

You'll be happy with a G.E.C.

A gift for the bride is a gift for every woman

No wonder this modern G.E.C. lightweight iron has become the favourite wedding present! No wonder that thousands of women are treating themselves to the Bride's Iron. It makes a lighter, brighter job of ironing day.

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The snap action of the thermostat is so quick that there is no irritating interference with radio or television programmes — either for you or your neighbours. Your ironing goes with a song. You'll bless the day you heard of the Bride's Iron.

Chromium, tax free or in Cream 45/-

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The Bride's Iron

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Super-speed **Kettle**
Fast-working **Toaster**
Designed for beauty **Hair Dryer**
Cleaners and **Floor Polisher**

Obtainable from your usual electrical supplier

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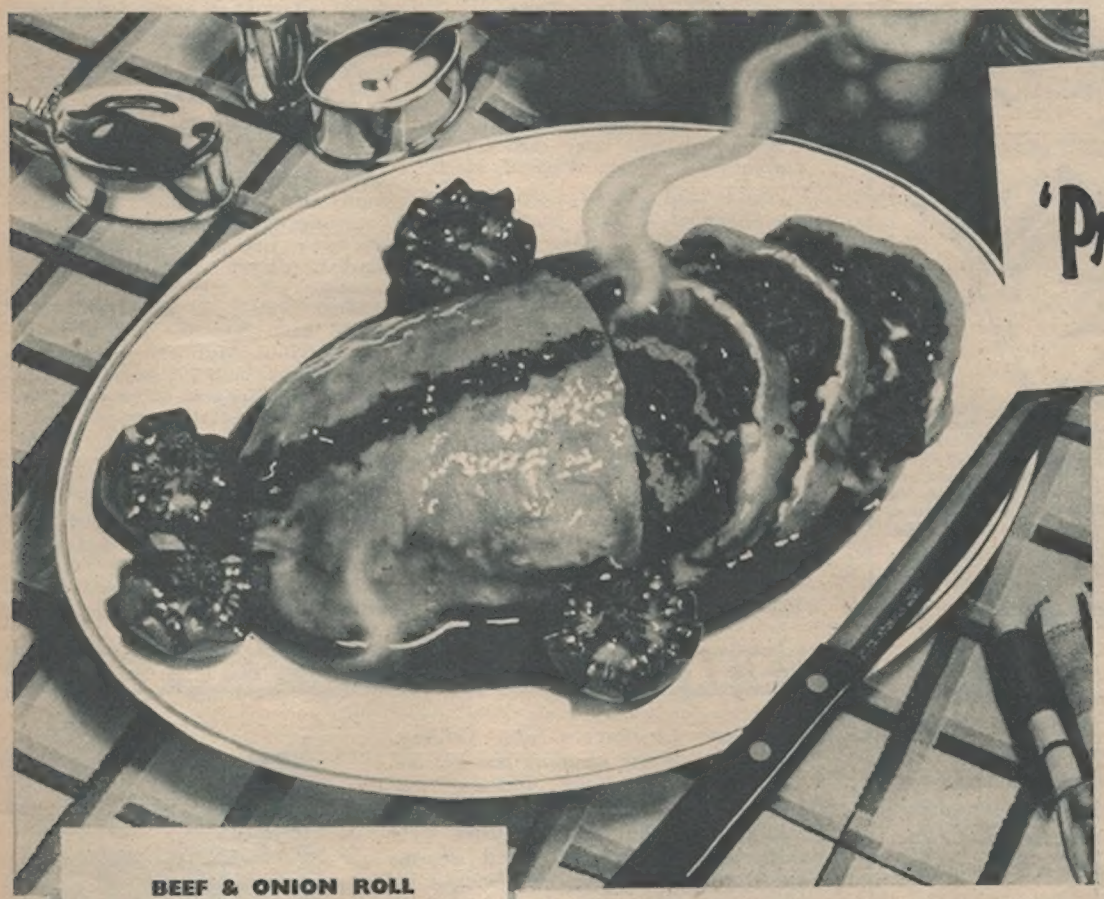

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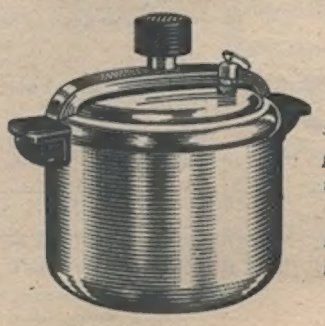
try it TO-DAY!

The 'Prestige' way of cooking is the speedier way. Meals in minutes for the whole family, beautifully cooked, can be yours without fuss and with very little effort. And if you live alone it is the ideal method of cooking, making the most of good food when otherwise "it seems unnecessary to go to all that trouble for one". Your dealer will tell you how a 'Prestige' Pressure Cooker will save you time, lower your fuel bills and give you delightful meals. With each model there is a free illustrated recipe book which shows you how simple it all is and how you can conjure up dishes in an enticing new way.

BEEF & ONION ROLL

Prepare 8 ozs. suet pastry. For the filling, mix together minced beef, onions, carrots, 1 egg, seasoning, a little stock. Roll in floured cloth, place in 1½ pints boiling water in Prestige. Steam 15 minutes over *low* heat. Pressure cook 50 minutes at 15 lbs. Reduce at room temperature.

make the Prestige *way your way of cooking*



There are six famous models to suit families of all sizes—and prices start from as low as 69/6 including separators for the 'Prestige' Minor (illustrated). From all good stores and ironmongers.

How little can a good watch cost?

This much is certain. Today you need not pay £10 or more for a wrist-watch you can wear with pride and consult with confidence. With their superb range of shock-resistant wrist-watches at prices from 47/6, TIMEX have changed everyone's ideas about watch values! TIMEX offer you elegant styling, a dustproof seal, *plus the* TIMEX *V-Conic shock-resistant movement which cannot be overwound.*

TIMEX SWING-A-LING — bracelet brooch watch, gold-plated case, elegantly styled matching bracelet, **92/6d.**

What is the secret of TIMEX value? All TIMEX watches are made on the same high-precision machines used for high-priced watches, in ultra-modern factories where new methods have drastically lowered costs. TIMEX are British-made and free from duty. Ask your jeweller to show you the wide new range of Fully Guaranteed TIMEX shock-resistant wrist-watches. Or write to TIMEX for new illustrated folder.

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FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

of Crosthwaite, Westmorland, about forty miles from Fountains Abbey, brought the story of "cryce" to light. He heard it from the late Canon Cooper, who was known as "the walking parson." Canon Bradley suggests that the monks of Fountains Abbey and other monasteries used the game to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity. Mr. Tom Wilson, Crosthwaite's local historian, says he heard the story from Canon Bradley twenty years ago, but he has never found documentary evidence to support it.

Cut Quality

DRIVING through Switzerland on my way home from winter sports last month I decided to buy some of the delicately hand-made wood carvings that always attract souvenir hunters in Switzerland.

When I stopped at Interlaken to tour the curio shops, I found the

town so flooded with carvings that I felt sure they were mass-produced.

A local shopkeeper assured me that the carvings were, in fact, done by hand. He told me that the nearby town of Brienz was the home of the wood-carvers, and that the State runs a carving school there to ensure that the craft does not die out. A four-year course is given free to students whose work will later earn foreign currency.—L. POPE, Watford, Herts.

Switzerland's wood-carving school was founded seventy years ago by Christian Fischer. When the government took it over, art and modelling were added to the curriculum. The photograph shows a local craftsman at work on a carved ibex.

Picked Or Piqued

SPINSTERS, widows and sailors' wives—I come in the last category—must have been disturbed to read that any lock can be picked (JOHN BULL, January 22). But the article reminded me of one method, used by a friend of mine, to trap burglars.

Before going to bed, she toured her house, putting enamel bowls at strategic positions on the stone floor. This was a nightly ritual. She went to bed happy in the knowledge that an intruder would sound his own alarm.—MRS. I. R. GALE, London Road, Downham Market, Norfolk.

Although almost any lock can be picked, locks can be fitted so that most intruders will be warded off, says Scotland Yard. By providing

doors with an ordinary lock, a mortice lock, and a bolt, a householder gives a potential burglar enough trouble to make him wonder if his journey is really necessary.

Wakey-Wakey!

A WOMAN who has just come out of hospital told me that she had only one complaint about the attention she was given: she was shaken from deep sleep every night to take a sleeping draught. — G. J. HALL, Thornton Heath.

"Quite probable," says a doctor. "As some drugs have to be administered exactly on time, hospitals enforce strict discipline. In this case, an experienced ward sister could have cancelled the doctor's order, but not a young nurse."

Reappraisal

MY son's school report contained the remarks "little aptitude," "lacks concentration," "improving" and "disappointing examination result."

The comments seemed harmless, but then my teacher husband explained they really meant "too dull," "no interest," "some glimmer of hope" and "if a miracle had happened he would have done better."

Apparently, the real clue to my son's progress is the remark in the conduct column. It says "exuberant" which my husband interprets as "a lively lad up to all sorts of mischief." That means there's hope yet. If the comment had been "exemplary," my son's work would never improve.—MRS. D. C. W., Glamorgan.

Selection Trouble

I HAVE heard of the Seven Wonders of the World but I didn't know there were nine. According to Wilfred Greatorex (JOHN BULL, January 22), the extra two are Stan Cullis as a football player, and Cullis as a manager.

What piffle! As a player, Cullis would have been the last to usurp some of our old-timers; he was just an ordinary club centre-half. And talking of managers, have you never heard of Herbert Chapman — and a few more? — J. PHILLIPS, Diggle, Oldham.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service

THIS WEEK'S COVER

WHEN London's Tate Gallery, where Fred Laurent has set his scene of past and present, was opened in 1897, Father reigned supreme in the home, clothes were stiff and voluminous, and storms raged round the paintings bought by the new gallery—a formal, musty place. Today, the Thames-side art centre is colourful and friendly, and the starch has gone out of clothes and home life; but this week's cover family unconsciously repeats the portrait pose—and storms continue to rage over the Tate's buying policy. "There's a moral here somewhere," says Laurent. "Perhaps it is that life, like good art, is timeless."

"Mummy never plays with me!"

It's easy enough for **you**. I'm with her the whole time – and always so tired...
You are a bit impatient with her, darling, and you never used to feel so tired. Why not see the doctor?

I eat well, get plenty of sleep – yet always wake tired and...
Well – there's nothing really wrong with you. You say you get plenty of sleep... but is it **good** sleep? Good sleep means **relaxed** sleep, when your nerves and brain rest properly, as well as your body. Try a cup of Horlicks every night.
SO HORLICKS EVERY NIGHT

HORLICKS

An irritating cough can usually be relieved by a demulcent remedy (*orthodox medical opinion*)

A teaspoonful of Veno's swallowed slowly goes straight to the sensitive membranes . . . bathes them in soothing demulcent syrup

VENO'S is 90% demulcent

—THAT'S WHY IT'S SO GOOD FOR COUGHS

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LIGHTNING
COUGH MIXTURE
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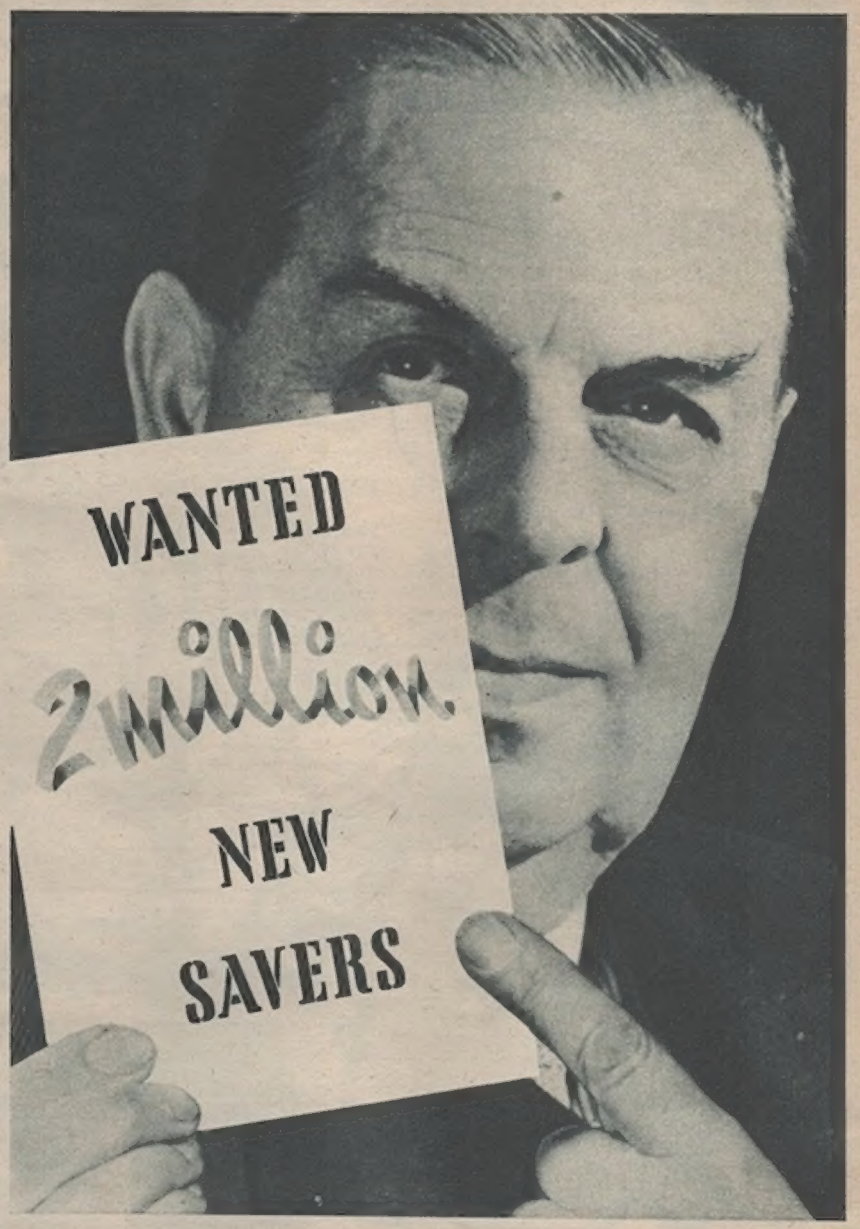
Veno's is a pure, medicinal cough syrup with a 90% demulcent action. A teaspoonful, sipped slowly, goes straight to the sensitive membranes of the pharynx and the larynx and is most soothing for a raw, dry throat. According to orthodox medical opinion, a demulcent is most effective for soothing a tickling, irritating cough. Veno's is almost completely demulcent. That is why it is particularly beneficial—especially at bedtime. But, as it is not a sedative and does not dope the nerves, it is entirely suitable for family use, and mothers can give it to children with complete safety at bedtime or any other time.

VENO'S COUGH MIXTURE

2/- and family size 3/3

Soothes the most irritating cough



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Another way to become a New Saver is by using some of your Savings Stamps to buy a 15/- Certificate or to open an account in the Post Office or Trustee Savings Bank with 5/-

BECOME A **NEW SAVER** TODAY!

Issued by the National Savings Committee, London, S.W.7

REQUIEM FOR A WREN

by NEVIL SHUTE

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

The war had taken a schoolgirl and made a woman of her. It had given her my brother to love. But the year was 1944, and ahead lay . . . Normandy

THE DEATH OF Jessie Proctor, my parents' parlourmaid, cast a shadow over my homecoming. She was found with an almost empty bottle of sleeping pills beside her on the day I got back to Australia.

My name is Alan Duncan. I am thirty-nine; a bachelor with, since the war, a pair of artificial feet. I had been in England for five years—too long, really, to leave all the responsibility of our sheep farm on a man of my father's age. Since the death of my brother, Bill, in Normandy, I had felt very conscious of the need for me in Coombargana, Victoria.

Jessie Proctor had been at Coombargana for just over a year and seemed to have been something of a mystery. She was English, but my parents knew little of her background. There were no clues among her belongings, either: no letters or documents of any kind. I thought how odd that was going to appear at tomorrow's inquest. . . .

It was only after my parents had gone to bed that it occurred to me that she might have hidden her papers. I started to search and eventually, in the loft under the roof, came across a suitcase marked "J. P." Feeling slightly ashamed at having to pry into the dead girl's secrets, I took it down to my room. It was full of papers, and I found her passport right away—but the name on the cover wasn't Jessie Proctor!

My heart gave a bounce and I opened the passport with fingers that were suddenly all thumbs. The photograph inside was of a face that I remembered well: the kindly face of Janet Prentice. She had been a leading Wren when I had met her last. That had been with Bill in Lymington, Hampshire, before D-Day nine years ago. . . .

PART TWO

Snapshot Of Bill

LITTLE practical jobs which had to be done mechanically saved me the necessity of thinking for a minute or two. I started to unpack the papers on to the table and arrange them into little heaps in order that I might examine them methodically, and very soon I came upon the photograph frame. It was a little leather thing that opened like a wallet

Bill's girl was different from any popsie I'd met. I offered to crank the engine, but she refused. "It kicks back," she said. "I'll do it"

to stand upon a table, that held two photographs beneath a celluloid glaze.

I stood for a long time with it open in my hand. I knew one of them; it was the one that Bill had had taken in Portsmouth, when he had been in training with the Royal Marines. It showed him in the uniform of a private. My mother has a print of it that stands upon the table in her room.

Opposite this one was a snapshot of Bill, taken shortly before his death, in the battledress uniform of a sergeant in the marines. Janet Prentice was beside him in the uniform of a leading Wren; he had his arm around her shoulders and they were laughing together.

I knew that one existed, though I had never seen it; my mother did not know of it at all. Bill had told me about it when I met him in the spring of 1944. I was at Fighter Command in those days. When a job cropped up that was to take me to a conference at Beaulieu aerodrome, I had shamelessly extended it in order that I might see Bill before "Overlord," before the balloon went up. I had booked a room at the Roebuck Hotel, in Lymington, and Bill had met me there for dinner.

DURING the first exchanges over a couple of drinks, Bill told me that he knew Beaulieu aerodrome. It was nearly two years since we had met. So much had happened to us both, so differently had we developed, that it took us a few minutes to establish contact again.

"There's a flight sergeant there in charge of the photo recce unit," he said. "He's a good type. Nobody's allowed to have a camera down here, of course, but he'll take anybody's picture for a dollar. I went up there with Janet this afternoon and he took one of us."

This was getting near the subject we both wanted to discuss. "Where's Janet now?" I asked. "Is she here?"

He shook his head. "She's only got a three-hour pass. But she's got a full day off tomorrow."

"Got anything laid on?"

"She's got a boat," he said. "When have you got to go back?"

"Be all right if I get off at dawn on Monday," I replied. "I've got a natter on with the Americans tomorrow evening, and I'll have to slip out to the aerodrome in the morning. It won't take long. I've got transport laid on."

He looked me up and down, and grinned. "All these bloody rings and gongs," he said. "I suppose they give you transport any time you want it."

I ordered two more gins. "Mum was asking in the last letter if you were ever going to get a commission."

"Not much," he said. "I get more fun this way. If I'd been an officer, I wouldn't have met Janet."

I glanced at him. "What does she do?"

"Q.O.," he told me. "Qualified Ordnance." Leading Wren. She looks after the guns on the L.C.T.s and the L.C.I.s in the Beaulieu River."

I raised my eyebrows a little. Most of the popsies that had come my way were ornamental young women from the ops room, or in radar.

Bill grinned. "She knows her stuff."

"Are you engaged to her?"

"No, nothing like that." He stood fingering his glass. "Not until after the balloon's gone up."

I said: "You'd like to be?"

He nodded. "She's a beaut girl."

"How would she go down with Dad and Mum?" At Lymington, in the British forces, we were a long way from Coombargana.

"She'll be all right."

I nodded. "Got any idea what you're going to do when this is over?" I asked him.

"When what's over? 'Overlord'?" He dropped his voice for the last word.

"No. The war. Think you'll go back to Cirencester?" Bill had come to England in July, 1939, when he was nineteen years old, to go to an agricultural college. He had stayed there, unwilling, for a few months in the period of the phoney war before enlisting in the marines.

He shook his head. "I'd never go back to school now. What about you?"

I had done two years of law at Oxford, at the House, on my Rhodes scholarship. "I wouldn't mind going back, to finish off."

"Go home and see the parents first of all?"

"Oh, I think so. For a month or two."

Bill put his glass down thoughtfully upon the bar. He said: "I'd like to marry Janet and go back to Coombargana, and stay there looking at the sheep for a long, long time."

I glanced at him quickly: "Like that, is it?"

"A bit."

He was a frogman at that time, of course. I did not know the full scope of his work then, though I knew that he went repeatedly to the beaches of northern France in the dark night. He seemed to be feeling the strain.

I said: "One of us ought to get back there as soon as possible." With my father on service in the Northern Territory, mother was running the station. She was putting up a marvellous show, but with half the men away at the war the property was obviously going downhill.

"Marry the girl," I went on, "and make an honest woman of her"—he grinned—"and go back and help Dad work it up again. If I ever come back, it's big enough to split up into two. Take Janet with you, and give her a shock."

He laughed. "She'll get that all right. A farm here means about a hundred acres."

"Who is she, Bill?" I asked him curiously. "What's her background?"

"Good middle class," he said. "You may know her father. He's a don or something, at Oxford. Prentice is the name."

I shook my head. "There's such a lot of them. What's he like to look at?"

BILL said: "I don't know. I've never had a chance to meet the family. I'll probably get round to doing that when the balloon's gone up."

Our lives hinged upon the date for "Overlord," still all unknown. Up at Fighter Command we none of us knew it; from the internal evidence that passed across my desk, I guessed it to be about six weeks off. I could not make that known to anybody, even to Bill.

We went up to the dining-room for dinner, a poor meal in those days of tight rationing. I said to Bill: "I hope your Janet can cook."

"I shouldn't think so," he replied. "I don't think she's ever had to do it."

"How old is she?"

"She joined the Wrens straight from school in 1941," he said. "I suppose she was eighteen and a half then. She'd be twenty-one now." He paused. "Somehow, she seems older than that—the way she goes on with the ratings. They're scared stiff of her on the L.C.T.s."

I smiled. "Scared stiff of her?"

"My word," he said, "you ought to see her carry on if she goes on board a ship and finds the gun rusty. They're more frightened of her than they would be of a C.P.O."

"She must have quite a reputation."

He nodded. "She has that. She's probably the only leading Wren who's ever been congratulated personally by the First Sea Lord."

I STIRRED, and came back to my room in Coombargana, to the present. A wood fire does not burn for very long; I laid the little photograph frame down upon the table and crossed mechanically to the fire, and put on two or three more logs. I did not go back to investigate the suitcase further; there was time enough for that. So many memories of Bill and Janet Prentice. . . .

May Spikins, Viola Dawson and Petty Officer Waters had all told me about Janet Prentice and her life in the Wrens, when I found them one by one in the postwar years, in 1950 and 1951. She had not kept in touch with any of them and they were little help to me in finding her, but they filled out the picture of the girl that I had met with Bill on that fine April Sunday before "Overlord."

She had a sister some years older than herself, who, in 1948, was married and probably in Singapore, but I never succeeded in discovering her married name. She had no brothers. She had lived all her early life in the pleasant, easy, academic atmosphere of Oxford; till 1939, when the war began.

I think that her last year at school was probably spoiled for her by the war. Her home was crowded with evacuees, and her education suffered, for school work in the evenings was unthinkable at the time of the Battle of Britain. She spent much of her leisure time at a depot that made up and dispatched Red Cross parcels. There was no fun in Oxford in those days.

It was a relief when her time came to join the Wrens, a relief and an unpleasantness at the same time; her first few days of readjustment at the training and drafting depot were not happy ones. But by the end of her fortnight of basic training the crudities of service life were gradually ceasing to offend. At that point she had to volunteer for her particular category of work.

She had no ambition to become a cook or a steward. She had a vague, unexpressed sympathy with things mechanical; she liked oiling her bicycle or tinkering with the mowing machine. She elected on these qualifications to become a Qualified Ordnance Wren.

She was sent to an ordnance depot for training, and then, with a batch of other Ordnance Wrens, she was drafted to Ford, near Littlehampton. At Ford aerodrome she passed the most formative eighteen months of her life. She went there as a callow, undeveloped schoolgirl, and left as a leading Wren, reliable, efficient, and very well able to look after herself.

War moulded her and made her what she was. When first she went to Ford, the German

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season was just over and the scent of jasmine rose from the dry walls and gibbet-like well-heads; the palm trees stood dark and clear against the cloudless night sky as my little caravan moved out of the oasis of el Majoub Zaouyèt. At first there was not a glimmer of light in the east, but after some miles the sun rose suddenly and in the distance, flooded with honey-coloured light among palm trees, we saw the tents of the Qouafi.

The deep, dawn silence was suddenly broken by the braying of a donkey and the barking of dogs and, between two sand dunes, figures dwarfed by the distance and indistinct in the golden morning mist began to move about the wells.

Man Gripped By Fear

I was shown to a Bedouin tent where I found a girl lying flat on her back, her glazed, dark-ringed eyes, in which the night's delirium still flickered, staring unseeing into space. Every now and again the word "water" came from her cracked lips.

The mother was bending over her, watching every breath and movement; she gripped my hands and arms with a force that surprised me in such a thin and apparently fragile woman.

I had never met the chief of the Qouafi, but I knew that he was reputed to be an aggressive and violent character. At that moment, there stood beside me only a man bowed down and stripped of all pride, a man in the grip of fear, who started at every sound, and who watched in anguish where his daughter lay, prostrate between life and death.

The mother had turned back the girl's *haik* and tucked it under her armpits, but in her feverish tossing, unable to bear the heat, the patient had thrown off the covering. Her hair was soaked with sweat and, as she tossed her head, the braids loosened and scattered the amulets worn as protection against the evil eye.

I called her by name: "Fattûma, Fattûma. . . ."

She fixed her eyes on me and murmured: "*Râsi yugia fiha* [my head hurts]."

Her chest was marked with small, rose-red spots, and she groaned when I sounded it with my fingers, shuddering at the contact of my cold ear on her skin.

The mother whispered to me that during the last few days, the girl had lost a lot of blood from the nose. How was it, she asked, that the evil spirits had not also departed, together with all that blood?

I was able to establish only a very fragmentary case history, but it seemed fairly certain that the evil spirit in this instance was the Eberth bacillus. There among the Qouafi camels, it was not possible to carry out a laboratory test, but I had little doubt that the girl was suffering from typhoid or paratyphoid fever.

It was seven o'clock in the morning, and the under-arm temperature was ninety-nine point four, from which I deduced that the disease was probably in the second week. Should I attempt the only treatment—a drastic one—that might arrest it? Again I examined the girl from head to foot. The heart seemed in excellent condition, and a summary analysis convinced me that the kidneys were functioning satisfactorily. We would try.

Seated on the edge of the mat, I felt the girl's arms to see which one would be better to use for the operation. I could feel the father's breath on my hair as, tense and watchful, he followed my every movement. The mother's eyes were fixed on me.

Mohamed tied a rubber band round the arm I indicated. The vein protruded under pressure, and I dabbed the copper-coloured skin with iodine. A syringe full of clear protein solution was ready; I stuck the needle into the vein and the blood flowed into the syringe, turning the contents red. I pressed the pump, and the liquid became white again and, while Mohamed untied the band, flowed slowly, carefully, into the vein, leaving an opaque patina in the syringe.

"And now?" asked the father while I washed my hands outside the tent.

"Now there will be a high, a very high, fever," I replied, adding in answer to his troubled, bewildered look, "and the fever, if it is Allah's will, will cure her."

The chief bowed his head: "Allah is compassionate and merciful."

The hours passed, and the fever mounted with exasperating slowness. By five in the afternoon, it was little more than a hundred. After sunset, however, the first sudden rise set in, and at ten o'clock her temperature touched a hundred and four.

As I sat on the floor, I could feel the eyes of the mother and father drilling the back of my neck. Behind them were the servants, and the tent was filled with a low murmur of prayer.

At midnight, the thermometer registered a hundred and five point two. The girl's body was jerking convulsively up and down. The skin had become lifeless: it gave no reflection in the light of the lamps.

Suddenly, the crisis was reached.

The pulse became less tumultuous, the arteries less turgid. Beads of sweat broke out on the forehead, and the skin of the body began to shine and to become soft and wet. Rivers of sweat poured from the neck, under the arms, down over the breasts, gathering in the hollow of the stomach. The mat on which she lay had to be changed and she had to be moved to another corner of the tent, because even the ground underneath her was soaked.

The chief tried to help, but the women pushed him out of the way into a corner: he was more hindrance than help, staggering about like a blind man, with a stunned expression on his face.

Fever Did Not Recur

At six in the morning, the temperature had dropped to ninety-six point four.

The fever did not recur during the next four days, and when I declared the daughter to be out of danger, the mother wept silently but the father kept his eyes on the floor and then suddenly raised his head, spread out his hands, palms upward as though they carried an open book, and in a voice suffocating with emotion, recited a prayer of thanksgiving.

Allah had willed that his daughter should live, and five camels waited before my tent to conduct me back to the city.

Three years later, when I was again in Misurata, there was a sequel to this story.

We were nearing the end of August, the hottest time of the year, when the wind blowing up from the south seems to come from an open furnace. My

Do not miss next week's JOHN BULL, in which Keith Ellis writes a frank profile of

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was that eyeshooting was no use at all for bringing down an aeroplane.

The Fifth Sea Lord wanted to see a shoot against the winged target, the First Sea Lord wanted to see if radar was really any good against an aircraft at close range, and both wanted a day down by the sea. With their attendant brass, they drove down in style from the Admiralty, had lunch with the captain of H.M.S. Excellent, and went out full of good food and Plymouth gin for their afternoon's entertainment.

The range officer at that time was a certain Lieutenant-Commander Cartwright, R.N., who had been transferred to shore duties for six months, after his ship had been torpedoed in the North Atlantic. Commander Cartwright was a salt horse whose profession was commanding a ship; he had little use for gunnery specialists and their toys. In his own mind, he gave strong preference to training and had little patience with experimental work. To him, the visit was a sheer waste of the time of busy people.

He let off at his R.N.V.R. assistant in hearing of the C.P.O. "Half the training classes won't get a shoot at all unless we stick our heels in," he said irritably. "These blighters seem to think that training doesn't matter."

When all the admirals and captains arrived, he was stiffly correct in his black gaiters, inwardly furious. The towing aircraft appeared dead on time, and far behind it a small winged object streaked across the sky.

Nobody knew how large it was or how fast it was going. The technical officers examined its flight with some concern. The predictor boys protested that some knowledge of the size was necessary to their fire-control. The radar boys complained that the thing was giving an uncommonly poor response upon the cathode ray screen, and voiced their suspicion that it was made of wood, which clearly wásn't fair.

They fired at it for an hour with the quadruple Vickers, with the multiple pom-pom, with a predictor-controlled twin Bofors. At the end of the hour, the target was still flying merrily.

COMMANDER CARTWRIGHT was a very angry man. His training classes were standing idle and laughing at each failure; clearly, their morale was suffering. They would have little confidence after a show like this that they could hit an aeroplane, if all the experts couldn't.

His instructor, C.P.O. Waters, sidled up to him. "I got a Wren down there could hit that, sir," he said out of the corner of his mouth. "That one what hit the sleeve on Monday. She's a natural. She could hit that."

The officer's eyes gleamed. "Think she could?"

"She could hit it, sir. Ask if some of the training class can't have a go, and leave the rest to me."

Commander Cartwright went up to the observation tower, caught the eyes of the captain of H.M.S. Excellent, and saluted smartly. "We have three courses waiting, sir, each for their final day of eye-shooting. Could we save time in getting out another aircraft by letting them shoot at this?"

The captain said: "I think that's quite a good idea. It would be interesting to see the comparison, too." The First Sea Lord said: "I have no objection. What time is it now? I must be off by half past four."

Down on the range, the chief said: "Here, you, Leading Wren Prentice. On the Oerlikon." She stepped forward, bursting with importance. The chief pulled the strap behind her shoulders and made it fast for her.

"Take it easy," he said quietly. "Wait till I tell you to fire."

Janet grinned at him. "Okay, Chief."

Up on the observation tower, a vice-admiral looked down to the Oerlikon. "What's that—a Wren?"

Commander Cartwright said: "Yes, sir. This is the eye-shooting class for ordnance Wrens. Ladies first."

Janet moved up on the circumferential steps behind her as she depressed the Oerlikon to the approaching target. By her side, the old chief said quietly: "Wait for it. Wait for it. Now—fire!"

She pressed the grip and the gun started shaking. She had the target held fixed in her sight exactly as she wanted it. And suddenly there were two flashes on the little glider. It rolled over on its back and one of the wings came off and began to flutter down. The chief roared in her ear: "Cease fire!"

She released her grip and the clamour of the gun stopped. The glider was plunging violently at the end of its mile length of cable. The rest of the class were cheering wildly.

Up on the observation tower, the admirals were perfectly delighted, especially the Fifth Sea Lord. "There, D.N.O.—and you, D.G.D. What about it? Beaten by a girl with five bob's worth of sights upon the gun!"

Somebody said resentfully: "She's probably a crack shot in civil life, sir."

The First Sea Lord said: "Well, I should like to know about that. Let's have her up here for a minute."

AN R.N.V.R. officer was dispatched at the double to fetch C.P.O. Waters and Leading Wren Prentice to the Presence; Janet put her cap on straight, and went up to the tower. Here she was passed quickly to Commander Cartwright, by him to the captain of H.M.S. Excellent, and by him to the First Sea Lord.

He said, "That was very good shooting, young lady. I congratulate you. What are you in civil life?"

She said awkwardly: "Well, sir—I wasn't

The captain looked straight at Janet. "I'm not taking disciplinary action," he said. "But

remember this in the future. You have absolutely no right to fire any gun against the enemy"

anything, really. I mean, I was at school."

The captain of Excellent asked: "What were you best at, at school?"

She hesitated. "Well, I liked Latin best, I think." It seemed a pretty crackpot sort of question to her, and it must have been, because one or two of them laughed.

The First Sea Lord turned to C.P.O. Waters. "Is this Wren exceptional, Chief?"

He answered stiffly. "Better than the general run, sir. A natural good shoot, I'd say."

The First Sea Lord said: "Well, I congratulate you on her. It was very good shooting."

The petty officer beamed with pleasure. He withdrew with Janet and they left the tower together and went down to the class.

They all bent towards Janet. "Did you see the First Sea Lord? What did he say?"

"He asked me what I did before I joined up," she said, "and I said I didn't do anything. And then the captain of Excellent asked what I was best at, at school, and I said Latin. I think they're all crackers, if you ask me. No wonder they can't hit the ruddy aeroplane."

I KNOW she said that, because May Spikins told me all about it that day in 1950 when we talked in her council house at Harlow. May Cunningham she was by that time, with a little boy, two years old. Warrant Officer Finch had told me about her when I went to see him about Bill, and I motored down to see her because I thought that she might be in touch with Janet Prentice, or at least know what had happened to her. But they had not met or corresponded since Janet left the service.

Janet was a very outspoken girl in those days. I felt something of the quality in her when I spent the Sunday with her and Bill, at Lymington, in April, 1944. She was obviously very good for Bill. He didn't have to put on an act.

It was she who produced the motor-boat that day for our run down the river to the Solent. It was a little grey-painted naval boat. She had it at the quay by the Ship Inn when I got back from Beaulieu aerodrome at about half past ten, and Bill and his dog were there with her.

Bill introduced me. She looked me up and down, smiling. "I'm afraid the boat's in a bit of a muck," she said. "You'll get that lovely uniform all dirty." There was a pad of cotton waste upon the engine casing, and she wiped the thwart with it.

"I'll be all right," I said. "Don't bother about me."

She turned to crank the engine. I offered to do it for her, but she refused. "It kicks back if you're not careful," she said. "I'll do it myself." She tickled the old carburettor, bent to the handle, and gave the heavy flywheel a vigorous heave over; the engine began thumping away beneath the box.

WE reached the end of the river and the West Solent lay before us. Bill looked over to the shore of the Isle of Wight, four miles across the sea. He said, pointing, "That tank upon the beach, see it? They were doing practice landings. That Sherman was wading ashore but it went down in a hole."

The girl turned to me. "It went right under water," she explained. "A chap got drowned in it—the driver."

"When did this happen?" I asked.

"About five weeks ago," said Bill. He grinned at the girl, and said nonchalantly, "That's how I met Janet."

It was in March, perhaps about the twentieth of the month, when Janet had been in H.M.S. Mastodon for about nine months. When she went there she had thought that she was going to a base of Coastal Forces to service guns on motor torpedo boats; security had masked the fact that she was destined for the build-up to the invasion of Normandy.

H.M.S. Mastodon was a stone frigate. It was Exbury Hall, about three miles up the Beaulieu River from the Solent. The river runs inland in a long reach between sea marshes till it comes to woods on either side that shroud fine houses of the wealthy. One of these was H.M.S. Mastodon, and it came as a great surprise to Janet Prentice and May Spikins when the truck deposited them there in June, 1943.

It was a stone-built, fairly modern country house in the grand style, with a flagstaff flying a white ensign on the lawn in front of it. All afternoon the two girls wandered up and down woodland paths between thickets of rhododendrons in bloom. They seemed to be the first Wrens to arrive.

For the first few weeks there was little work for them; and the respite in the glorious surroundings was a sheer joy to Janet. The past eighteen months had left her more tired than she knew.

Presently, she joined Leading Wren Viola Dawson in the naval cutter, with Sheila Cox and Doris Smith, and spent most of each day with them. When a new landing craft came in, Viola Dawson would take the cutter alongside and put Janet on board. She would spend an hour with one or two ratings dismantling the Oerlikon or recharging the drums, her hands in a wet slough of coopers' grease. And she would raise Cain if she found a gun neglected. She had a mechanical sense, and rust upon a gun was as a physical hurt to her.

"Just look at that!" she would say severely to an abashed rating. "If I find it like that again I'll bring the ordnance officer to see your captain. No, I'm not kidding. I will. I've never seen a gun in such a muck."

Throughout the autumn and the winter, activity increased in the Beaulieu area. At the very mouth of the river, a construction gang

Continued on page 41

Cyril Lord spins himself a fortune

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

The miracle cloths he weaves do not shrink and need no ironing. In ten whirlwind years, he has built a textile empire on test-tube fibres—and showmanship

WITH AN AIR of mystery that suggested the unveiling of a secret weapon, individual dress manufacturers were recently shown small samples of cloth. The material looked, felt and reacted like silk shantung at sixteen shillings a yard.

"Don't tell anyone," whispered one salesman. "We are going to produce this fabric for as little as four shillings a yard."

Ten weeks later, Cyril Lord, the creator of this new synthetic fibre, which he calls Taiho, had orders for three million yards. He predicts that within a year, exports of Taiho will fetch £1 million in foreign currency.

The secrecy with which Taiho was first introduced to the dress trade reflects Lord's showmanship. The fabric itself is an example of his skill as a textile technician. The mills that weave Taiho are the product of his financial acumen. A short, bald and forceful Lancastrian who seldom sits still, Lord has combined financial, technical and sales ability to become richer more quickly than even he expected.

Starting in 1945 with £20,000, Lord, at forty-three, is now a five foot three inch giant controlling a textile empire of sixteen mills and fifty-four retail shops whose fixed assets are £4 million and current assets £3 million. He owns nine-tenths of these holdings.

Lord's attainment of millionaire status coincides with the era of miracle fibres—Acrilan, Ardil, Dynel, Fibrolane, Orlon, Terylene and nylon. Chemists create these new materials from such everyday sources as coal, oil, milk or groundnuts. Lord, the cloth doctor (his London address is No. 1 Harley Street), turns these wonder synthetics into fabrics for the consumer.

Caught In The Tramline

Despite his personal success in textiles, Lord remains concerned about the future of Britain's textile industry in the face of Indian and Japanese competition. Not long ago, while addressing the Bradford Textile Society, he was asked what he would do if he were a young man today. In view of Japanese competition, would he choose textiles as a career?

"No, I wouldn't," Lord replied. "I'd commit hara-kiri."

Another questioner wanted to know why Lord remained in the textile industry if he were so worried about Japan.

"I'm like the man on a bicycle caught in the tramline," Lord declared. "I can't get out. All I can do is head for the depot."

Lord is not content with issuing warnings about foreign competition. He meets it by modernizing his mills, developing new fabrics and maintaining business contacts around the world. He started 1955 with a whirlwind trip across America. His appointment book calls for a meeting with the Prime Minister of New Zealand on February 25. The following week he has to be back in the United States to carry out his duties as Chancellor of Florida Southern College. An institution with a faculty devoted to scientific work on textiles, the college accorded Lord the honour of chancellor in recognition of his work as a textile technician. The only other Englishman who has held the office was the late Sir Wilfred Grenfell.

He is at his happiest working out constructions of new fibres. About a year ago he began producing a blend called Cyron. It is made from rayon, nylon and Ardil. Because of its cheapness, rayon is used as a base. Nylon lends strength and binds the Ardil with the rayon to get a relatively soft effect rivalling the fullness and suppleness of wool.

Problems In Construction

Lord says he can make a fabric from this blend for nearly half the price of comparable woollen worsted. Cyron can also be waterproofed, a quality that Lord demonstrates by dashing water on a length of cloth and watching it roll harmlessly away.

Reaction to water is one of the first things Lord studies in a new fibre. One property common to most of the test-tube materials is their tendency to repel water. This gives them the "miraculous" power to resist shrinking and to dry quickly. It also creates problems for Lord in fabric construction. Because they don't absorb much moisture, the wonder fibres cause dyeing problems.

Reaction to heat is another factor Lord investigates. Heat sensitivity gives Acrilan, Dynel, Orlon, Terylene and nylon their "miraculous" power of resisting wrinkles and holding pleats and creases. In fact, the pleats and creases are made by gently melting the fibres with a hot iron and letting them cool in the desired shape. Properly set, they cannot be removed by washing, but they can be taken out by using an iron at a higher temperature than was used to make the crease. Too hot an iron will wilt the fabric or glaze it.

To dramatize its power to hold creases, the producers of Dacron (the American equivalent of Terylene) pay a man in a Dacron suit to jump into a swimming pool. He emerges without a wrinkle or a lost crease. His suit is cleaner because the synthetics relinquish dirt faster; but because suits have other components that require dry cleaning, the day of putting them in a washtub is still remote.

When a new man-made fibre becomes available, Lord requires a long list of information concerning its physical and chemical properties. From these facts, and samples of the fibre, he can determine whether the new product can be adopted by his spinning and weaving mills.

Lord inspects a dress of Taiho—one of his a millionaire, Lord began his textile career

Nearly all the synthetics, Lord feels, have suffered from over-enthusiastic description of their advantages. Nylon rightly earned a name for strength, quick drying and little need for ironing. Customers who bought it for curtains soon found that it had a drawback that had been overlooked—nylon deteriorates in sunlight and ozone.

Now, chemists are working on a new version of nylon that will stand up to sunlight and make suitable curtain materials. It will probably be a new synthetic with a name of its own.

Works A Twelve-hour Day

Born in Droylsden, Lancashire (he emphasizes the L, S and D in spelling the town's name), Lord started work in a bank when he was fourteen. He did not like it, and through the help of his Sunday School teacher he found employment as a mill apprentice at 12s. 6d. a week.

Not content with what he could learn in the mill, Lord enrolled at the Manchester School of Technology as a night student. The habit of working long hours remains with him, and in the summer it is not unusual for Lord to rise at six, play tennis, breakfast in the flat above

latest fabrics made from synthentic fibre. Now as a mill apprentice and earned 12s. 6d. a week

Models prepare to show Taiho at a fashion parade. The material resembles silk shantung but costs only a quarter as much. Lord expects Taiho exports to earn £1 million within a year

his Harley Street office and then begin a twelve-hour working day.

Lord first came to London to work soon after his twenty-first birthday. The job involved research into textiles and he accepted a £50 a year reduction in pay in order to accept it. As compensation, his new employers offered him the opportunity to travel and study. He was soon making frequent trips to Germany.

The Germans were experimenting with rayon to produce an ersatz wool. "We had plenty of wool," Lord recalls, "but I thought we could do something about turning that fine long rayon into fashion fabrics that would be a substitute for silk."

Before setting out for Germany, Lord was cautioned to insist that the Germans with whom he was to work should always speak to him in English. He took this advice, but also mastered German to make sure that he missed nothing.

His experience in Germany broadened Lord's technical knowledge. Besides experimenting with fibres, he was also mastering cloth construction. One of his early designs incorporated tennis rackets, and he arranged the weave so that there were holes between the threads to simulate racket strings. It was a success everywhere but in Java. The customers there feared that evil spirits would enter through the holes.

During the war, when Northern Ireland's textile mills were threatened with idleness because flax supplies were cut off, Lord's ability as a cloth doctor was sought by the Board of Trade. He recommended long-staple rayon to feed the starved Ulster mills. Before the war, Northern Ireland was manipulating three per cent of the United Kingdom's total fibre rayon output. As a result of the work Lord did in converting the mills to rayon, Irish production has risen to twenty-eight per cent of the total.

After the war, Lord went into business for himself. The results that he had achieved in boosting Ulster's rayon output had impressed textile and financial interests, and this helped his transition from technician to mill-owner.

Piloted His Own Aircraft

Lord began to build a textile organization to do his own spinning, weaving and, where suitable outlets did not exist, to sell directly to the public. He soon found himself with mills and offices in Northern Ireland, Lancashire and London. He frequently employs as executives men whose skill commands high fees. As a result there are nine or ten men on his payroll who draw larger salaries than Lord himself.

To supervise his operations, he took to flying his own aeroplane. Recently, under pressure from his associates, he reluctantly agreed to give up piloting the aircraft. Mills and offices are now linked by teleprinter, and Lord satisfies his urge for speed by driving fast cars in Ulster, where there is no speed limit, and by running a speed boat at his home in Donaghadee, County Down.

Twenty-one miles from Belfast, Lord's modern bungalow at Donaghadee is the home for his wife and three children. During the summer, Lord joins them at weekends. In the winter his visits are less frequent and his wife comes to London to join him in the flat above his office.

Lord is a familiar figure in Belfast, where, as well as being a textile magnate, he is chairman of an important restaurant concern. Outside the city, at Templepatrick, County Antrim, is another Lord sideline, a modern roadhouse called the Pig 'n' Chick'n.

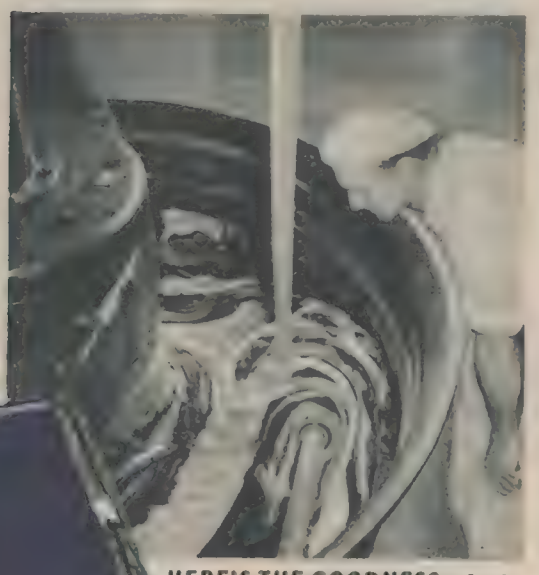
The Pig 'n' Chick'n was opened in the same style as his mills. He gave the inn its name, contributed ideas and installed an expert to run the place. He backed this venture, he says, to establish a place where he could be sure of getting ice-cold tomato juice. THE END

GOOD THINGS FROM THE FACTORY IN A GARDEN

No wonder you can taste the cream in Cadburys Dairy Milk Chocolate*

A GLASS-AND-A-HALF OF MILK IN EVERY HALF POUND

So much fresh full-cream milk goes into Cadburys Dairy Milk Chocolate, it's not surprising you can taste the cream. From scores of farms the rich, creamy milk is brought daily to Cadburys milk collection centres. Here it is tested for quality and purity, then — not to lose a moment of its freshness — it is immediately sweetened and concentrated. The chocolate mixture is ready waiting for it and now they are brought together to be mingled into that wonderful chocolate famous all over the world as Cadburys Dairy Milk.



HERE'S THE GOODNESS—fresh, full-cream milk sweetened and concentrated—pouring into the chocolate in the mixing machine.

120 A MINUTE! Many machines like this are working at top speed. We hope they will make sure you get what you want every time you say '*I want Cadburys*'.

**In 1905, just 50 years ago, Cadburys first began making their full-cream Dairy Milk Chocolate—famous for the glass-and-a-half of milk that goes into every half pound.*

Cadbury's DAIRY MILK CHOCOLATE CADBURY'S MILK

Cadburys

FACTORY IN A GARDEN

In his wartime uniform, Denti talks to a local judge. The tribesmen thought his medicine tame—they treated illness with fire-balls and blood-letting

Beginning a doctor's strange adventures in the African desert, where his Arab patients were beautiful women, proud warriors and bandits

A CURE FOR SERPENTS

by ALBERTO DENTI

HAJJ AHMED ES-SED was a person of importance. Not only did he possess houses, land and livestock, but he had also made the pilgrimage to Mecca—as indicated by his title Hajj. Moreover, he was called Sed, which means "Lion." He was tall, with a long beard reaching down to his chest.

I first met him at a dispensary which I had opened in Misurata on the Tripolitanian coast. He was introduced to me by my manservant Jemberié Igzaou, who was to be my faithful shadow in all my wanderings across Libya and Eritrea in my capacity as a physician and Italian colonial administrator.

Jemberié, an Abyssinian as black as coal, was a Coptic Christian and very proud of his religion. He paraded among the Arabs, adorned with a brass cross so large that an archbishop might have coveted it. He had an extremely low opinion of Mohammedans, but every now and again he came across an Arab of whom he thoroughly approved, and on these occasions he gave me no peace until he was allowed to present the person to me. "He great man," Jemberié would say. "He heart like milk; he have everything in his head." And it was in this manner that he introduced me to Hajj Ahmed.

Jemberié was moved and fascinated by a great misfortune that had befallen this unhappy man. It seemed that, for some time, Hajj Ahmed had suffered from atrocious stomach pains. Naturally, a person of his rank could not be afflicted with the ordinary, vulgar complaints to which common men are heirs: extraordinary people must have extraordinary diseases. It appeared that Hajj Ahmed, having had occasion to go to Sirte, had spent a night on the Wadi Sofeggin and, while he was sleeping, a serpent had entered his mouth and curled itself up at the bottom of his stomach. And there it had remained.

To make matters worse, Hajj Ahmed had since had a dream in which his deceased father had told him that not only was there a male serpent in his stomach, but also that it was a particularly malignant reptile. Unfortunately, a native healer to whom Hajj Ahmed had

When Denti set up his dispensary in Misurata, revolt smouldered in the hinterland and the town was cut off. Here he performed his serpent cure

appealed for help had confirmed this message from beyond the tomb, and had added that unless Hajj Ahmed could get rid of the serpent —which was none other than an evil spirit from the infernal regions—it would certainly kill him within a few months.

In the meantime, Hajj Ahmed suffered the tortures of the damned at the hands of quack surgeons, blood-letters, makers of amulets, and matrons who knew mysterious remedies. He had tried one cure after another, and experimented with the whole gamut of medicaments which comprise the Arab pharmacopeia.

From the moment when he first acquainted me with this startling history, Jemberié never ceased talking about it and begging me to give his noble protégé the medicine which makes serpents flee. He was convinced that, just as an extract of male fern frees the intestine from tape worm, so there must be a medicine capable of ridding the stomach of serpents. At the same time, he pestered the pious Mussulman to try my cures, and the unfortunate man, desperate after so many unsuccessful experiments, finally acquiesced and decided to consult the Christian doctor.

From that moment, my life became an absolute hell. For three months I was at the beck and call of Hajj Ahmed es-Sed's serpent. Hajj came to the dispensary in the morning and in the evening. If I would not see him, he waited for me in the street and followed me home. Sometimes he got there before me, and when I arrived I would find him installed in the salon with a cup of coffee which Jemberié had hastened to offer him.

The truth was that Hajj Ahmed was suffering from disorders of the circulation—glandular disturbances and nervous illusions which made him feel that his stomach was swollen like a waterskin, and that he had a suffocating stoppage in his gullet.

For two whole months I tried by every means to convince him that there was no serpent in his stomach and that he must follow some serious treatment. He let me speak, listened patiently without taking the least notice of what I said, and then resumed his discourse about the serpent, the accursed serpent which was "devouring his life."

After months of this persecution, I came to the conclusion that unless Hajj Ahmed either succumbed or recovered, I would inevitably be placed in a padded cell. It was then that I decided to cross the narrow line that separates the physician from the charlatan.

Believed That He Would Die

One evening, Hajj Ahmed was waiting for me at the corner of the piazza as I left the dispensary—waiting for me with his hand on his stomach and the expression of one condemned to death. As soon as he saw me, he cried: "O *tebib*, will you not liberate me from this serpent which is killing me? Do you not believe the words of my dead father?"

I took him home, and as we drank our coffee I talked to him.

A father's words, I said, are sacred, but very often, words heard in a dream are imperfectly remembered, and it may be impossible to discern their exact significance. God, however, knows all, and I might have been mistaken in my incredulity. How could we find out the truth? Hajj Ahmed could, of course, go to Tripoli where the radiologists would be able to confirm or deny the presence of the serpent. But if this evil spirit were cunning enough to assume the form of a reptile, it would certainly be easy for him, would it not, to make himself invisible to the rays?

Hajj Ahmed gravely approved my reasoning and assured me that this demon, if not the Prince of Evil himself, must certainly be one of his ablest lieutenants.

There was, I continued, only one way to find out whether the serpent was there or not: to open Hajj's stomach.

"O Hajj Ahmed," I said, "if there is no serpent, I will close the stomach again and will say to you: 'My brother, I was right.' If, on the other hand, I find the serpent, I will drag him out, and you shall crush his head so that he shall never again trouble the sons of Adam."

Hajj Ahmed became so excited that he upset his cup of coffee. "You can truly free me from the accursed thing, O *tebib*, and give me back my life?" he said. I nodded, and finally he departed, full of excitement and expectation.

With a great deal of cautioning, I confided my plan to Mohamed ed-Dernaui, my dispensary nurse. Flattered by my confidence in him and pleased to play a part in the conspiracy, Mohamed swore to take the secret to his grave.

The plan could be carried out in the evening, he said, when the dispensary would be empty and the city preparing for sleep.

Mohamed had worked for three years in the operating theatre of the Tripoli hospital, and had administered chloroform; the narcosis would only last a few minutes and there was no risk. Mohamed would also provide the indispensable accessory for the success of our undertaking—the serpent. In his excitement, he promised to get me serpents of such a size that I was obliged to curb his enthusiasm and to remind him that

a human stomach could not contain a python.

Hajj Ahmed arrived punctually, late in the evening, with the Negroes who were to carry him home after the operation. His servants remained in the courtyard. With his face towards Mecca, he recited the evening prayer and then, naked, mounted the operating table.

Putting on my rubber gloves, I covered his chest and stomach with three sterilized cloths; part I left uncovered and duly disinfected with alcohol and tincture of iodine.

Mohamed fixed the chloroform mask on Hajj's face. The pious man was praying; his voice became muffled under the mask; very soon the words faded away and he was breathing deeply and regularly. The moment had arrived.

I took up the lancet and cut an incision in the skin of his stomach, until it seemed to me long enough for the extraction of even a young crocodile. I stanched the bleeding and, with fifteen stitches, sewed up the wound. Mohamed executed a most artistic bandage.

Cardboard Box Held Serpent

Hajj Ahmed was still sleeping. The Negroes carried him away on a stretcher. I watched them go, followed by Mohamed, who carried under his arm a cardboard box, carefully closed and tied with string; it contained an unfortunate and furiously struggling serpent, which he was to present to Hajj Ahmed when he awoke.

On the following day, I went to see Hajj Ahmed at his house. I found him extremely well. He was, of course, resigned to remaining in bed for a fortnight, since it would be unwise to take risks after such a serious operation. But he was radiant, and sought with great magnanimity to comfort me.

"Everyone makes mistakes, *tebib*," he said. "Only Allah is all-wise. You see, there *was* a serpent; my father did not lie, and I did not misunderstand his words."

Deeply moved, he embraced me: he did not wish me to take my mistake to heart; it saddened him, he said, to see me confused and mortified.

"But you have saved me, O wise one," he said, and he embraced me again, patting me on the back to encourage me. "It was you who had the idea of opening my stomach to liberate me from that accursed thing. I had tried all the remedies, all the exorcisms and spells, but the healers shrugged their shoulders; only you were able to cure me. Praise be to Allah, who has granted you knowledge and wisdom."

Called Operation A Trick

It had not been possible to keep Jemberié in the dark, and I had let him into the secret. At first he did not understand. What need was there, he had asked, for Mohamed to catch another serpent? Wasn't the one in Hajj Ahmed's stomach enough? And if there was no serpent in his stomach, why did I want to put one there? When I had explained to him that the serpent was only an illusion of the patient, and that in order to cure him it was necessary to remove the illusion, he was first astounded and then advised me to have nothing to do with it. Hajj Ahmed, he said, was certainly too intelligent, too highly educated and too clever to be taken in by such a vulgar trick.

After the miraculous operation, Jemberié visited the convalescent with me, and was dumbfounded when he heard the description of the operation, based on the fantastic picture painted by the incorrigible Mohamed, and saw the great man weeping on my neck as he eulogized my prodigious performance. In a moment, all Jemberié's admiration for the noble gentleman of Misurata evaporated and he banished him forthwith to the amorphous crowd of Mohammedans whom he despised. As we left, Jemberié said: "He just like all Arabs; only he plenty more ass."

In fact, of course, Jemberié had little right

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Alberto Denti (left) in Libyan dress, with two of his assistants. Mohamed ed-Dernaui (right) found the serpent for his "miraculous operation." Denti, who is sixty-eight, was captured by the Eighth Army during the war; in 1946 he retired to Rome to write books. In addition to "A Cure For Serpents" he has also published "The Graceful Gourmet," a book about food. Born at La Spézia, he qualified as a doctor in 1910; when he joined Italy's colonial service he became personal physician to the future Duke of Aosta. Later he was made Governor of the Western Provinces of Abyssinia, and then Governor of Tripoli. He now lives in an eight-roomed flat in Rome with his wife Angiola, whom he married a year before this story begins; they also own two "somewhat weather-beaten villas," one near Venice and the other in Sicily. Denti, who has no children, inherited his four hundred year old dukedom in 1952, and is also Prince of Castellazzo. He speaks five languages, including Arabic, and seven dialects.

Enter a young lady

by ***JOSEPH GIES***

ILLUSTRATED BY TANAT JONES

He was the fourth Evan Taylor to walk the stage, and the fifth was due—tonight. Then came the message . . .

THE TWO YOUNG PEOPLE sat side by side on the sofa, pale and tense, the young man's jaw thrust out in half-frightened defiance, the girl's face frankly terrified, her hand clutching his. Opposite them Evan Taylor stood, grim and polished in white tie and tails, a carnation in his buttonhole. His coat, hat and stick were flung into the chair next to him. He drew a silver case from his pocket, lit a cigarette and, still without taking his eyes from the pair on the sofa, tossed the match accurately into the china bowl on the mantelpiece.

"You realize," he told the young man, "that if I were to shoot you down like a dog, no jury would convict me. In the eyes of all decent people, you are a scoundrel. However"—he gave the slow, worldly shrug that had become his hallmark—"we are not decent people."

His two hearers looked up hopefully, the tension easing.

"Therefore, I say, go your way. I release you both from all obligations to me. Take her; take him; go."

They rose; the girl kissed Evan; the young man pressed his hand.

And then, at the last moment, as the girl disappeared out of the door, the older man, with a confidential grin, informed the younger, "To be utterly candid, for the last six months I've been hoping to be relieved of the boredom of her company."

Out of the darkness beyond the footlights burst a storm of applause from the packed theatre.

The curtains swept together, only to part immediately, revealing Evan Taylor alone on the stage, bowing and summoning his supporting cast from the wings—the young man, the girl, the comic landlady, the policeman.

The applause was for Evan alone, and ordinarily it would have been silly to pretend he didn't love every second of these curtain calls. But this evening was different, and he strode impatiently offstage after a mere two, leaving the audience clamouring behind him. Nobody, he thought, would be at his job at a time like this, when his wife was having a baby. Nobody except an actor, whose working day might be short, but who could never, never deviate from his timetable—from 7.30 to (in this run) precisely 9.45.

He made his way swiftly through the wings to the phone by the stage door, grabbing a towel from his dressing-room door knob as he passed. Stagehands and fellow actors parted to let him pass. He dialled the number with one hand, rubbing off greasepaint with the other.

"Hallo? Is that the nursing home? This is Mr. Taylor. Can you tell me——?"

"Oh, Mr. Taylor, you've a baby girl!" the nurse exclaimed with unprofessional breathlessness. "She was born just ten minutes ago!"

He stood holding the receiver, the hand with the towel arrested in the middle of its task. A girl. . . .

"Hallo? Mr. Taylor?"

He thanked the nurse, elicited the information that Madeleine had come through with flying colours, and told her he would be there directly.

Slowly replacing the phone, he turned to wave to the others before stepping through the door. The whole bunch was there, watching respectfully.

"It's a girl, everybody!" he called. "And Madeleine's all right." There was a chorus of oh's, ah's and congratulations.

"But didn't you want a boy?" someone asked tactlessly. He turned, his hand on the door. "Nonsense," he said. "I've always preferred girls."

A nice exit line—laughter followed him into Shaftesbury Avenue. A taxi was coming down from Cambridge Circus; he grabbed it before it reached the theatre entrance, where the first of the crowd were just emerging.

MOST of the other theatres were emptying now, and tonight the whole West End seemed jammed with people and traffic. The confusion grew as they glided through the throng of pedestrians.

Evan chafed at the frequent obstructions. The nursing home was close to Hyde Park Corner, but it looked as though it was going to take him an age to get there.

They reached Piccadilly Circus, and then, as the taxi swung round into Piccadilly, Evan spotted a late flower-seller on the corner. Telling the taxi-driver to stop, he jumped out on to the kerb. Roses—Madeleine's favourite flower. They looked as though they wouldn't last till daybreak, but no matter; you could always get more roses, and he bought four dozen.

How many roses had he given her, he wondered, since the first ones, in Paris in 1937? There were at least a million roses at the wedding in London. And when Madeleine was in Hollywood while he was on Broadway he had telegraphed them across the country. He had

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As he gazed at his daughter, Evan found he was

olding his breath. Why, she was beautiful! And how composed and ladylike—what stage presence! He forgot he had wanted a boy. He had fallen in love

A thousand dogs fight for the army

by JOHN ENNIS

Alert and aggressive, they come from pet shops and family firesides to guard supplies, patrol jungle swamps and rescue casualties. Their trainers say: "A man and a dog are worth eight men"

STAFF SERGEANT Albert Stanley Morton, of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, picked up a broomstick one day in April, 1953, and stood, hidden from view, behind the gatepost of an army supply depot in Malaya. Native labourers crowded in through the gate for their afternoon's work. Behind them walked an army dog handler, leading a black alsatian guard dog.

Morton had brought two alsatians, Pask and Zitus, to the depot two weeks earlier, after the commanding officer had asked for dogs in an attempt to end large-scale pilfering of rum and cigarettes stored in sheds on the site. After Morton had trained two soldiers to handle the dogs, the C.O. demanded a demonstration to impress would-be thieves with the new danger they faced. Behind the gatepost, Morton was ready.

He waited for the dog to draw level, and gave it a sudden dig with the broomstick.

"The dog went wild," says Morton. "The first man to run was the sentry. He tore up the road with the crowd of labourers close behind him. Nobody could persuade the labourers to come back to work that day. But there was no more stealing of rum and cigarettes."

Helped To Starve Bandits

Time after time, in the six years he has trained dogs for the army, Morton has seen problems that caused headaches to commanding officers speedily smoothed out when dogs were put on the job. When British patrols were unable to stop sympathizers from Malayan villages breaking the curfew and creeping out at night with food for bandits hiding in the jungle, Morton trained dogs to accompany the patrols. Then he toured the villages, showing the people what the dogs could do.

Before awed watchers, one dog savaged a man who wore a thickly padded suit and a fencing mask. Another made a murderous attack on a dummy, and a third, muzzled, leaped on a soldier impersonating a food carrier. From then on, many bandits went hungry.

"Dogs save manpower," says Morton. "The army officially recognizes that a man with a dog on guard is equal to six or eight men without a dog. The psychological effect of having to face a fierce animal keeps away an intruder who would take a chance with an armed man."

Following tours in Greece, Egypt, Malaya and Singapore, training dogs and men to handle them, Morton is now senior n.c.o. instructor at the Royal Army Veterinary Corps War Dog Training School at Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. At the beginning of January the school

Outside the school, an instructor teaches a dog to stand guard. Dogs learn to dislike strangers, and will attack at a single word

Padding saves a soldier from injury while training an alsatian. In Malaya, villagers broke the curfew to supply bandits with food. Mock attacks by dogs on dummies soon dissuaded them

Sergeant Morton breaks off from grooming a dog to talk to Lieutenant Hunter, school commander

which was opened in 1948 had ninety-six dogs in the kennels: alsatians, labradors, bloodhounds, dobermann pinschers, boxers, and a friendly bull-mastiff called Tich, weighing eleven stone four pounds, and kept as a mascot. Last year, 318 dogs were trained at the school, out of five hundred offered for training. Morton estimates that there are more than a thousand dogs working on British military duties in various parts of the world.

Many dogs come as gifts. The school buys others, largely from dealers, at prices of up to £20. To be accepted, the dogs must be between eighteen months and three years old, healthy, intelligent, aggressive and not gun-shy. Dogs rejected are returned; if their owners do not want them, they are given to people living more than fifty miles from Melton Mowbray, or painlessly destroyed. Many vicious-looking boxers are rejected because they are "too kind." They make good pets for children. Appearance can often be deceptive in a dog, says Morton. "Tail wagging certainly doesn't indicate friendliness. We have many dogs here which will attack while they are wagging their tails."

War dogs are among the best cared-for animals in the world. They are groomed and exercised daily. Morton recalls an occasion in Malaya when he had too many men and dogs to deal with on a training course. "The men were Gurkhas," he says. "To save time, I showed them the grooming procedure on only one side of the dog. Later I found that one man had groomed the same side of his dog every day for a fortnight."

Tracked Down Stolen Food

Each war dog learns a specific job. Besides guard dogs and "barkers" (guard dogs that have gone soft and are useful only for giving warning that an intruder is approaching), there are message carriers, pack dogs that can carry up to one-third their own weight, casualty-finding dogs, tracking dogs and patrol dogs.

Many of the n.c.o.s who serve under Morton have been in Malaya and Korea with patrol dogs —which work on a breast harness and a fifteen-foot pilot rope. When Chinese in Korea were suspected of creeping through the lines and helping themselves to food from British stores, Sergeant Stanley Barker, now chief tracking dog instructor at the school, took his dog on patrol. "The dog led us to a cave, where we found stolen rations for about fifty men," says Barker. Corporal James Rogers, now Barker's assistant, remembers a night in Malaya when, though all seemed quiet, a dog handler noticed his dog "pointing." He looked up and saw three armed bandits approaching. He shot it out and won. "That man would have been killed if he had not had a dog to warn him," says Rogers.

Mongrel Traced Shot Man

Though most war dogs are thoroughbreds, Rogers collected mongrels from Malayan villages when he ran short of trained dogs, and successfully taught them patrol work. One, named Diamond, found a man who had been shot in an ambush the night before. "Without the dog, it would have taken a whole company of men a week to search the area and find him."

Most dogs need at least seven months to learn the more intricate jobs, though some take as long as two years. Guard dogs can be trained in ten weeks. The dogs work to earn praise and pieces of meat.

When Morton begins training a new dog, he grooms and feeds it daily and takes it out for exercise, giving it a chance to grow used to him. Then he begins the basic obedience training. Patiently, day after day, he indicates to the dog what he means when he says any of the basic words of command: "heel," "sit," "down," "stay," and "come."

Two men are trained with one dog, so that they can work with it alternately. "We always find," says Morton, "that the dog chooses one of the two, and works better with him."

When the dog is instantly obeying the basic commands, Morton and his n.c.o.s begin training it for its particular job. Guard dogs are "teased" by a soldier wearing a civilian raincoat and hat. While its handler holds tight to the lead, the teaser waves sacking in the dog's face, or taps its forelegs with a light switch. This teaches the dog to dislike strangers. It soon learns to attack anybody on a word from its master, and to return from the attack immediately he calls.

Tracking dogs read a trail as readily as a man reads a book. The dog follows the human scent, the smell from crushed vegetation and the smell of small insects that have been trampled underfoot by the quarry.

Last June, Duff, one of the school's best tracking bloodhounds, appeared on television. Duff went through fifteen rehearsals while the cameramen lined up their cameras. By the time they were ready, the small field chosen for the display was criss-crossed with tracks. When the scene was finally shot, the man Duff was to trail zigzagged about the field and hid fifty yards away, sending out a full, direct scent to the dog. After smelling his handkerchief, Duff made off in a straight line for where the man was hiding.

"Duff's handler had to drag him along the track the man had made," says Captain Donald Harris, who was then commander of the War Dog School. "Even amateurs must have seen it was a fake."

Dog Used In Murder Hunt

Six weeks later, Duff redeemed himself. A woman was stabbed to death in a garden near the school, and Captain Harris took Duff to help the police. The dog led them to a spot on a railway line where, an hour before, a man had been found injured. Duff's action linked the attempted suicide with the murder. Next morning, following the same trail, Duff stopped by some deep undergrowth. Police searched, and found the murder weapon, a kitchen knife. Men with mine detectors had failed to find it.

Every war dog has its number tattooed inside its left ear. Each dog has a name, and finding new names grows more difficult. "Nearly all alsatians are called Rex when they come here," says the school's present commander, Lieutenant Francis Hunter, a qualified veterinary surgeon. "We have changed this to Dex, Mex, Trex, Grex, and we even called one dog Sex." Dogs give little reaction at first to new names. Recently a man in Melton Mowbray lost his alsatian, called Len. He telephoned Hunter and his description fitted that of a dog a man had sold to the school under the name of Major.

"I went to the kennels," says Hunter, "and called 'Major.' The dog gave little reaction. Then I called 'Len,' and he started to leap about. It was Len all right. We sent him back to his master." THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

The devoted wife of Richard Hamilton

by ***JOHN DUNKEL***

ILLUSTRATED BY NASH

With love, money and kindness, she was smothering him. He couldn't stand it any longer. Defiantly, he turned to the mountain. It was his one chance

I SAW HER first across the lobby of the hotel in New Delhi that day in May, 1951; she was the kind your eye quite easily picked out of a crowd. And I'd just come back from three lonely months in the Garwhal.

I wasn't even aware she was with a man until they both approached and he spoke. "Mr. Tilton? May I introduce myself? I am Richard Hamilton, of Chicago, and this is my wife, Elizabeth.".

So she was married. Ah well, I suppose I was old enough to have been her father anyway.

Over tea we chatted; small talk. I'd been to America several times and had visited Chicago once. They had read my books. I knew more about the Himalaya, Hamilton said, than any other man; that's why he had wanted to meet me. That led up to it. Somehow he had obtained permission to enter Nepal, to trek into the mountains. Right from the start, that was odd; such permission is not easily gained. But anything is possible for a wealthy young American, I suppose.

More important, he was inexperienced at this sort of adventure and wanted help. Wanted me to accompany him, in fact.

I explained that I was on my way home to England and I was already tired from three months in the mountain back country. I was about to decline firmly, with thanks. But I couldn't resist asking to what section he was going.

"The Langtang Himal."

I gazed at him. For many years, I had wanted to reach the Langtang, and had never managed it.

There was an odd sort of fire in the man's eyes as he talked. The trip would take only five weeks, with two in the Langtang high country. He was due in Katmandu the following week; equipment and supplies were already waiting and porters arranged for.

I was sorely tempted. I said slowly, "Of course, you've climbed before?"

"A little. Nothing spectacular. Nothing like these mountains."

I chewed on my lip. I could easily postpone my return to London. A bachelor has no one to answer to, and my business would keep. . . .

"If I were to reach the Langtang," I said, "I should want to do a bit of nosing about. Nothing difficult, you understand, just scrambling."

"I was hoping you would." His eyes shone.

"Of course, we could chance no real climbing—we should be limited to the high valleys—close to inhabited places." He nodded agreement. "Still, I should insist upon the addition to the party of a pair of Tigers—Sherpa mountain men. The lowland porters will not operate, or even stay, at the high altitudes."

"Sure. I figured you would know about their hire."

"Then that would make a party of four, outside porters."

"Five. Betty is going, too."

I was stunned for a moment; this was totally unexpected. "But you understand, these mountains aren't like your American ranges. It's no easy thing, an expedition into that wilderness. It means many days of hard foot travel, with no accommodation of any sort."

"If you think that women can't take hardships, Mr. Tilton," she said, "you're mistaken. I shall be no burden to you, I promise."

"You really *want* to go, Mrs. Hamilton? Why?"

She paused and smiled. "Because Richard is going. Isn't that enough?"

THE first week in August saw us in Katmandu, the capital of Nepal. And I had a foretaste of the trouble to come. Hamilton and I were checking over the supplies and attempting to eliminate some excess poundage, when Mrs. Hamilton rushed in, breathless and aglow, holding up three pairs of rubber boots.

"Look, gentlemen! No wet feet for us! The only three pairs of hip boots in Katmandu."

Hamilton looked up. "Betty, for Pete's sake!"

Her face dropped. "You don't like them?"

"We have to cut down," I explained. "Not add more. We're throwing stuff out now."

Hamilton turned away from her. "What else?" he asked impatiently.

"The coffee should go," I said.

"Right."

"But Richard! You love your coffee so."

"It's out, Betty," he answered icily.

My eyes travelled down the food list. "This

"Run for it," I ordered. Betty was near to hysteria as we scrambled across the glacier. Suddenly, we heard bullets whining towards us

last case of canned food is unnecessary, too," I told him.

"Throw it out!"

"But Richard!" She was almost in tears. "I made that up specially. With all of your favourite dishes."

"Oh, for God's sake, Betty!"

Her chin began to quiver. "Why must we cut down, Mr. Tilton?"

"This much weight will take four extra porters."

"Then why not hire them? They don't cost much, do they?"

"Three rupees per day per man. That would come to three, maybe four, hundred rupees extra."

"Well then! For pity's sake, hire them," she said.

I glanced at Hamilton. His face was furious.

"Sure! Hire them!" he said bitterly. "It's *her* money!"

It's easy, in retrospect, to say that I should have known then. But I'd come this far and the Himalaya was in view, a spectacular white crest impossibly high above the distant horizon. We started towards it next morning, the long line of porters moving ahead across the rice fields. I watched Elizabeth Hamilton closely—and was properly impressed by her performance. She tracked along easily without appearing to tire unduly. Once she caught me watching and grinned.

"You see, I'm the outdoor type after all, Mr. Tilton."

Her husband ignored her for the most part, sometimes a little churlishly, it seemed to me. Once in the afternoon we had to cross a roaring stream on a flimsy log bridge. Hamilton went first and his wife started to follow. Then, evidently frightened, she stopped and teetered a bit. "Richard! Richard—help me!" But he went on steadily, ignoring her. Perhaps he didn't hear.

I stepped forward. "Here, take my hand!"

She drew back, regained her balance, and her face went set. "No. No, thank you, Mr. Tilton. I'll manage." She did.

AFTER that the incidents seemed to pile up. The third day, before we had gained much altitude, a drenching rain burst upon us, forcing us to take shelter under some rocks.

"How long will it last, Tilton?" Hamilton asked.

"Hard to say. We're nearing the monsoon season, and sometimes these storms can last a week. We'll have to push on to the Trisuli. By tomorrow, it may be too swollen to cross."

"But we *can't* go on in this!" Mrs. Hamilton asserted. "If it's going to last indefinitely—Richard," she looked at him pleadingly, "maybe we'd better turn back."

He ignored her. "Tilton, what do you advise?"

I shrugged uncomfortably. "Go on. But it's

"You were nearly free of Richard," I said, vindictively. She turned to me in anguish

a lot to ask of a woman. It's your decision—and hers."

"She wanted to come," he said. "She'll have to take it like the rest of us."

Elizabeth bent her head. "You needn't worry about me. I'll be perfectly all right."

I have never seen a woman look more miserable. That vision of loveliness I had seen was now soaked and bedraggled and hollow-cheeked with fatigue. It was very disagreeable going, but she did not complain.

Luckily, that night the rain stopped. But it had caused a massive landslide on our path and we had to climb two thousand feet in the heat of the day to pass it. By mid-afternoon Elizabeth was dead on her feet and I decided to do something about it. I stopped the column and told the porters to make camp.

"Why are we stopping?" Hamilton wanted to know. "I thought you wanted to make Braghu tonight."

"It's not essential. No use overtiring ourselves. We can make it up tomorrow, after we're rested."

"Oh, thank goodness!" The woman's weary voice came over our shoulders. "I couldn't have taken another step."

"Is it because of Betty you're stopping?" he asked icily.

My voice must have betrayed my anger.

"We are *all* tired. That includes myself. And the porters. That was a hard climb today, and we're not used to the altitude."

"I'm sorry," he said. "I guess I've got a lot to learn."

"I guess you have," I said.

Two days more brought us to Syabrubensi. We were deep in towering mountains now and, with Tibet only a few miles away, this was Buddhist country. We passed chortens and prayer walls, along which the devout Sherpas murmured their prayers. The sixth day we reached Langtang village, with its bare-looking stone houses, the long prayer streamers flying from the roofs. Close to the north-east loomed the overpowering bulk of the ice mountains I had dreamed of.

Here we paid off the porters and sent them back; starting tomorrow, the Sherpas and Hamilton and I would shoulder the packs, taking only the light, high-altitude equipment and supplies, leaving the rest here in Langtang village.

We had arrived at a time of religious festival and that night we all sat round the square and watched the celebration and dancing. Flute, drums and bells made a primitive background of sound while a plaintive voice sang the Tibetan words.

Hamilton was enthusiastic. "It's terrific! And those girls! They're actually pretty!"

Suddenly Mrs. Hamilton's cool voice broke in. "Richard, I'm going to lie down."

"Not feeling well, Mrs. Hamilton?" I asked.

"Only a headache. Don't let me disturb you." She looked white and drawn.

"May I get you a headache powder?"

"Don't bother, Tilton," Hamilton cut in. "Let her play the martyr."

The sudden viciousness again startled me. "I say——!"

But she was still calm. "Please don't bother. I have aspirin. Good night."

Hamilton had not even turned, or answered her. "Don't worry about her, Tilton," he said, when she had left us. "It's an act."

All the feeling that had been growing in me boiled up. "Perhaps," I answered. "But we're over eleven thousand feet, and headaches are quite customary at this altitude. And damned disagreeable. I think I'll turn in, too."

By now I knew I should not have come. My feelings for the man were almost unspeakable. And for the woman, I had sympathy and admiration that was almost akin to love. I was acutely conscious of that the next day when we started the traverse of the long valley which would carry us up almost to 16,000 feet and deep into the glacial heart of the range. Elizabeth had insisted on carrying a small pack, but at that height every step was torture, and before long she was dropping behind, labouring with exhaustion. Hamilton and the Sherpas were far ahead, but I stayed with her and finally stopped her for a rest.

She was gasping by now, almost unable to speak. "I'm—sorry, Mr. Tilton. I'm holding you up. I promised—not to do that."

"We're very high. Sit and rest. We'll leave the pack here. One of the Sherpas can come and fetch it."

"No, I'll manage it." She sat on a rock and I saw a shudder pass over her.

"It's so terribly desolate. I've never seen anything so lonely."

"It's no place for a woman," I answered resentfully.

"It's no place for a human being. And yet, *you* come to it—not once, but again and again. Why?"

"An insatiable curiosity, I suppose. I have to see what's on the other side of the hill. The horrible truth is, I'm afraid, I'm one of those useless persons called adventurers."

She considered my words gravely, staring out into the rocky wilderness. "Don't you ever get lonely?"

"I've been lonelier in a city. Loneliness is not all environment. It's something within." I watched her lovely, brooding face. "At any rate, one can learn to live with loneliness."

"I know," she answered very softly. She drew a breath. "I'm ready now."

Before dark we reached Langsisa, which is only a small abandoned *gompa*, a sort of one-room Tibetan lamasery. While Elizabeth and the Sherpas made the place habitable for the night, I went outside. Now we were in the centre of the Langtang basin, surrounded by the Himal, its massive snow peaks flaming crimson towers in the setting sun, its long-fingered glaciers deep purple mysteries in the shadowed canyons.

I noticed Hamilton sitting off to one side, drinking it in, seemingly in a kind of trance. I hated the man, but I was aware that my feeling was perhaps not entirely pure, and guilt softened me.

I walked over to him. "Worth coming to see, isn't it?"

"They're tremendous! Beautiful — and awful."

"And dangerous."

There was the same intense, fanatic light I had seen in his eyes before, but now it was magnified. "Tilton," he said quietly, with great decision, "I want to climb. To the top."

"Forget it!" I said.

"Why?"

"It would take a major campaign. We're not conditioned for it, or equipped for it. Neither personnel nor supplies."

"If we went light and fast? It's not impossible."

"It's suicidal."

He looked at me slyly. "Wouldn't you like to climb it?"

"Very much. But I've stayed alive this long by knowing what not to do."

"It *might* be easier than you think. Why not scout it?"

I PAUSED. The best way to rid him of the absurd notion was to show him the impossibility of it. I stared up at the peak. "This side is impracticable. Ridges too long, too steep, too much ice. The glacier is one great ice-fall. Any possible route must be from the main ridge or the north side."

"Let's look there."

I studied the ridge. "There's a low col to the east. We might be able to get a look into Tibet—perhaps a glimpse of Gosainthan."

"We'll go tomorrow." He spoke almost before the words were out of my mouth, and his eyes were shining.

I had sudden misgivings. "Wait! It's only a reconnaissance, you understand. And there's an end to it."

"I understand. Tomorrow then!"

That was my second mistake in judgment; my own itch of curiosity got the better of me. Again Mrs. Hamilton insisted on coming, but she held

Continued on page 29

Leo Hopkins juggles with air

by JOAN POWE

At his touch, it blows hot or cold. His invisible ally can boost comfort and output—and build nurseries for mosquitoes

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, scientists who were studying tropical diseases found that certain types of mosquitoes which they needed for tests did not breed quickly enough in the British climate. They called in Leo Hopkins, an air conditioning expert, who recommended an electrical unit which would heat, moisten and circulate air, reproducing the steamy conditions of an Eastern jungle.

The following day, Hopkins went to the scientists' laboratory in Wiltshire to install the equipment, and was shown into a room where the insects were bred. He was about to start work when he looked at one of the walls.

"Mosquitoes had escaped from a nearby container and were swarming round a hot pipe," he says. "I dropped my tools and bolted. If I had stayed, I would have been a guinea pig for a dozen tropical fevers."

Hopkins, who did not continue with the job until his clients had swatted every mosquito, is a tall, lively Londoner of thirty-four. As the chief testing officer of Heat and Air Systems, Ltd., he travels many thousands of miles a year, installing air conditioning plant in hospitals, offices, hotels and factories. His biggest contract was a £50,000 unit for the Admiralty; his smallest, a £30 order from a medical school which wanted to study human reactions to high temperatures.

Worked Among The Shark

Among his more unusual commissions are a machine in a bus depot which cleans cushions by beating them and extracting the dust by suction, and a fish-drying chamber which he built in a three-masted sailing ship. He went to the vessel at Grimsby and worked in gumboots among cases of dried shark.

Hopkins spends up to ten days testing each installation, carefully checking dampers, lubrication and other details. Smoke released from canisters enables him to watch the behaviour of air streams, but, after what happened during a test which he did in Dublin recently, he makes sure that people know he is using it.

A factory hand saw the smoke pouring out of a window and called the fire brigade. Part of the building was evacuated, and Hopkins narrowly missed being drenched by hoses. "The firemen needed a lot of convincing that I was not a practical joker."

When he is testing large, air-warmed ovens which are used for paint-drying processes, he walks about inside them, taking readings with a thermometer. Clients have anxiously watched him step into a temperature of 350 degrees Fahrenheit, wearing a lounge suit, and stay there for three minutes at a time without getting burned.

Broke Out In Blisters

"My only precautions have been to take off my wrist-watch—my first one fell to pieces after a few inspections—and to empty my pockets of pens, or anything else which might be scorched," he says. "The secret of withstanding fierce heat is to move very slowly."

An assistant realized the importance of slow motion when he ventured inside an oven, felt overcome and ran back to the entrance. The rapid movement caused the sweat on his face to dry so quickly that his skin came out in blisters.

Since his tests include a thorough search for fuel leaks, Hopkins was puzzled when a factory complained that a paint-drying plant was wasting gas. Further examination failed to reveal a fault, so he went to the factory early

Hopkins (left) inspects a hot cleaning plant at a London bus depot. On some jobs, he goes into ovens with temperatures of 350 degrees

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPH BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

—but fortunately he remembered

Becoming increasingly nervy and tired through overwork, he was beginning to fear a breakdown. He had lost his appetite, and slept badly. At the office he made mistakes; at home his wife was worried about him. Sometimes he felt he was ageing, yet he was not much over forty. *Forty!* Then he remembered. *Phyllosan fortifies the over-forties!*

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one morning and hid behind the oven. A few minutes later a workman, who was obviously following a regular routine, lit the gas and started to cook a meat pie for his lunch. "His pies had cost his employers twenty-four shillings a day in gas bills—and almost ruined my firm's reputation."

The solution of other clients' problems has needed an expert knowledge of the delicate balance between the success and failure of air conditioning systems.

When a typewriter works in Scotland reported that an oven was not working properly, Hopkins needed only a brief inspection to find why the temperature had dropped. Some painters had closed a damper in an air duct and had forgotten to reopen it.

On another occasion, a business executive protested that it was impossible to work in his office. "A blast of cold air sweeps over my desk," he said.

Hopkins sat at the desk and agreed that the draught was unreasonable. Then he walked across the room and took the executive's coat off a rack on the wall. The draught vanished immediately.

"The rack was put up after the plant was installed, and the coat deflected an air stream on to the desk," he explains. Changing the position of the rack prevented a recurrence of the trouble.

During rush jobs, Hopkins has worked as a member of his engineering teams for long periods at a stretch. In 1949, when an air conditioning plant had to be transferred from one factory to another at short notice, he went for five days and nights with practically no sleep.

"On the last day, I was on the roof, helping to assemble a high exhaust stack, when fatigue made me lean forward," he recalls. "I just stopped myself from falling twenty feet on to a pile of jagged timber."

Shrank The Socks

He concludes his tests of a plant by setting the control panel to his calculations, taking photographs for record purposes, and instructing staff how to operate the equipment.

Plant which involves high temperatures and strong air flows must be treated with respect, he says. When he saw that some factory workers were using an oven for drying wet clothes, despite his warnings to keep away from it, he decided to let them find out the power of the machine for themselves.

He pretended not to notice one morning when the men arrived at work, took off their socks and hung them in the oven. A few hours later, in the lunch break, he returned the socks ceremoniously to their owners. "The hot air had shrunk each one to a length of three inches. It was the last time they used the oven for personal belongings."

Hopkins, who is married, with a six-year-old daughter, lives at Wokingham, Berkshire. When he left school, his father offered him the choice of learning draughtsmanship or taking an engineer's course in air conditioning. He chose the latter, and at nineteen was his firm's youngest foreman.

During the war, he was released from the army to install plant in munitions factories. It had been found that workers' efficiency could be improved by air conditioning—a science which textile mills developed in the nineteenth century when they moistened, or "conditioned," air while spinning yarn.

"Human comfort depends not only on warmth, but on correct humidity and a steady circulation of air," he says.

A Harmless Gadget

Hopkins measures air currents with a sensitive device which has mystified people. At Northolt Airport, on his return from a trip to the Continent, he had difficulty in persuading Customs officials that it was a harmless gadget. They blew into it and studied the reaction of the dial before they were satisfied.

In all, Hopkins's instruments are worth £200, and often attract spectators while he is doing tests. He welcomes queries which might avoid misuse of plant, but once, while he was examining an oven, a foreman annoyed him by asking a stream of questions.

Deciding that the man's aim was to catch him on a technical point, Hopkins used his knowledge of the oven to play a joke. "I am going inside," he said. "Would you care to follow me?"

He led the way, but ducked beneath a jet of hot air which he knew was above the door. The foreman caught the full blast and retreated, choking for breath. Thereafter, Hopkins was left in peace.

Three years ago, however, an attempt at being humorous about his work had unexpected results. His firm had been asked if an air conditioning machine could be used for drying parachutes, so he went to a factory where he had lately installed an oven, and started a drying test.

A girl worker watched curiously while he dipped a parachute in a tank of water and hung it in the oven. When she asked what he was doing, he replied: "I'm going to jump off the roof."

Later, having finished the test successfully, he was surprised to see a large crowd in the grounds, staring upwards. "A crank who is studying air is going to jump off the roof with a parachute," a man told him.

"I left in a hurry," says Hopkins. "Fortunately, I have not had to go back there since." THE END

THE DEVOTED WIFE OF RICHARD HAMILTON

Continued from page 26

up admirably, even though the altimeter registered over 18,000 feet at the col.

And it was worth it. The view to the north was magnificent, the broad Chasachen glacier below us, the Tibetan ranges beyond, and a few miles away, Gosainthan, one of the world's highest peaks, rose like a giant to 26,300 feet.

But there was disappointment for Hamilton. No route was visible up Lirung. And the north side of the col dropped off in a steep ice wall 1,500 feet high. We could go no farther.

"If only we could see the north face from here!" he fretted.

"We'd have to go around the mountain and come up the river that feeds from that glacier."

"Let's do it," he answered promptly.

"It would take two, perhaps three days—and might not be worth it."

"I have to find out," he said, a little wildly, like a man possessed. "If there's a way up this mountain—I'm going to find it."

I was beginning to be exasperated. "Now, see here, Hamilton——"

But he interrupted sharply, anticipating me. "With or without you, Tilton, I'm going to try it."

His wife stared at him amazed. "Richard, you're acting like a madman!"

"You have nothing to say about this, Betty," he said, with sudden, surprising calmness which only lent emphasis to the words. He turned and strode off down the slope.

I turned to the Sherpas. "Go with him. Rope up on the snow, just in case."

THEY followed him quickly and we were alone on the suddenly empty col. The wind pulled tentatively at her hair, and she was fighting back angry tears.

"Altitude affects people in strange ways, Mrs. Hamilton. I don't think he understands what climbing above twenty thousand can be like."

She glanced up into my eyes. Hers were surprisingly cool now. "You won't let him do it?"

"He's master of his own fate. But I'll do all I can to dissuade him."

She looked away again, her face almost hard. "Thank you. You're kind." She sank down against the rock and seemed to make some effort to compose herself. Then, without looking at me, she said, her voice quite soft, "You're a strange man. You have never married?"

I smiled, perhaps a little uncomfortably, for I felt a sudden apprehension. "I've turned my back on many of the good things of life, I suppose, because of this mountain madness. And now, I'm afraid, it's too late."

"Why? You're not old and you're quite attractive. I should imagine many women might love you." Then, after a pause, she added softly, "I might myself."

My breath caught. I said, forcing my voice to lightness, "That would be very pleasant. But like so many of the others—you already *have* a husband, worse luck."

A sudden darkness crossed her face. "Yes. Shall I admit something to you? Sometimes I wish I were free of him. Richard is worthless, you know, a coward and a fool." The surprise must have shown in my face, for she glanced up and then suddenly smiled. "Of course, that's only when he makes me angry. I really shouldn't like to lose him. He's all I have."

There was nothing to say. But a sudden doubt was forcing itself into my brain.

She stood up abruptly. "I suppose we must humour him a little? Let him go round to the other side of the mountain?"

"Perhaps that would do no harm," I agreed.

"Good. We'll humour him. Just a little longer." There was an astonishing iciness in her tone. She turned and looked up into my face with melting, intimate eyes. "Thank you. We won't let anything happen to him, will we?"

"Nothing's going to happen to him," I answered gruffly, taking her arm and guiding her towards the down slope.

That must have been the first hint I had, a momentary lifting of the veil. And as it turned out, it was a useful preparation for an unpleasant scene that same night in the *gompa* at Langsisa.

I had been outside, with the Sherpas, supervising the cooking, and I went to the little stone house to fetch something and to warn the Hamiltons that the meal was almost prepared. As I neared the open door I was surprised by the sound of quiet sobbing, and then Hamilton's voice: "Stop it!"

I paused, arrested at the doorway.

"That won't work this time, Betty. Those quiet tears. That reproachful look. Save them. Change the act." His voice was hard and final.

The sobbing quieted. Hamilton was out of my sight but, around the corner of the doorway, I could see Elizabeth kneeling on the dirt floor, watching him. Her face, which was half-turned from me, seemed to be twisted and puffed from crying. I stood discomfited but fascinated, unable to move for fear of revealing my presence.

"Richard, how can you act this way?"

"After all you've done for me?" he asked furiously. "And what *have* you done for me, Betty? Made a man out of me? Or a coward, a weakling, a pampered parasite?"

"You know I love you—" Her face was tragic.

"Betty, a man must have something else—his self-respect. And you've killed that for me, with your money, your love, your smothering kindness and thoughtfulness—with your gallant suffering and your quiet tears." The voice paused, softened almost to tenderness. "It's hard to fight a martyr, Betty. Hard to live with one, too."

She stared at him. "If you go, you'll be killed. I know it."

"All right. That would solve everything."

Pain crossed her face. "I can't lose you," she said, harshly. "I'd be alone."

"We're *all* alone, Betty," he told her gently. "We can't escape that. That's why we must be able to live with ourselves. I've got to do this. Just this once. Face life—and death—by myself."

Her lips contorted and the words came out savagely. "I've humoured you up to now! I let you come here. But I won't let you do this! I won't let you spoil everything!"

His voice was solid and strong. "I'm sorry if it spoils anything for you, Betty. But I've lost something, too, and I must find it. And I will."

"Richard!" she cried in terrible fury. And I realized that now she could neither hear nor see anything beyond that room. So I moved hurriedly away, back to the fire.

WE went around the mountain to Rashua Garhi, the tiny Nepalese border fort perched precariously on a sheer rock wall. A flimsy bamboo bridge spanned the deep chasm to Tibet.

The officer in charge of the fort, a former Gurkha, welcomed us warmly, but smiled when he heard of our plan. It was not possible to proceed farther up the gorge on this side, he said. The only path was across the river, on the Tibet side. And that could be exceedingly dangerous. . . .

"Dangerous?" said Hamilton. "Impassable, you mean?"

The officer said soberly, "The Chinese Communists may take over Tibet. There have been many signs. If they do, they will undoubtedly close the border."

"But it's only a rumour," said Hamilton.

The captain nodded. "That is the rumour."

Elizabeth, silent until now, said

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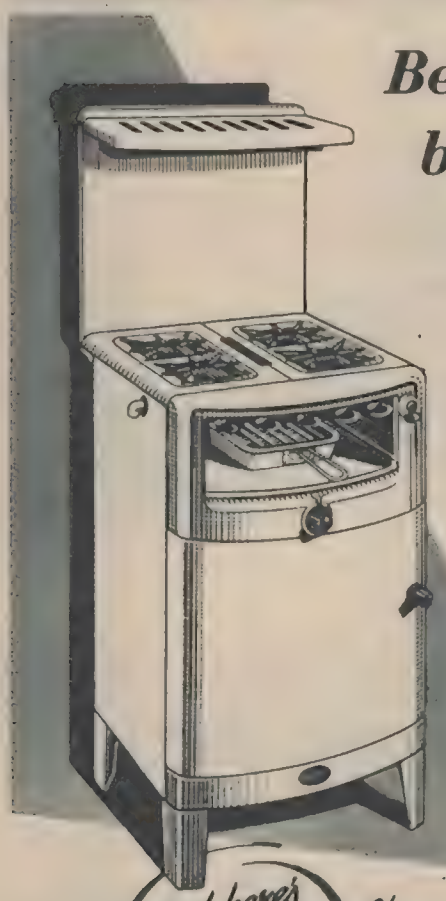

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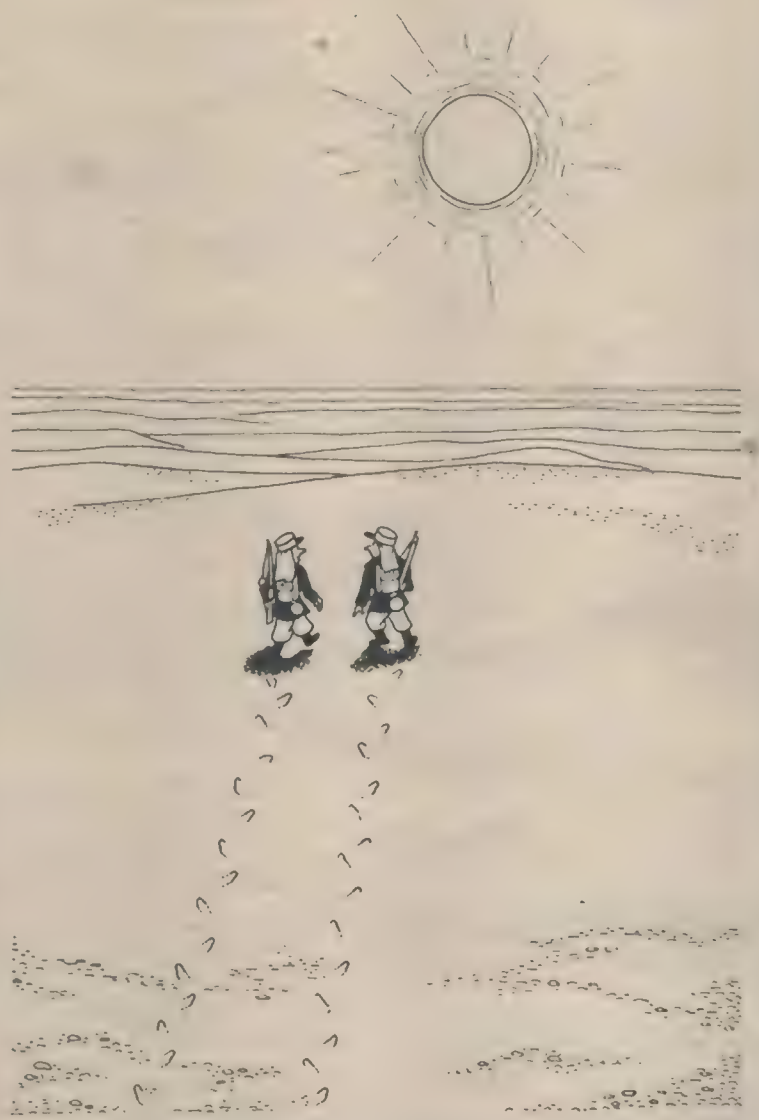

"It was that endless journey up to the office and back that finally got me down"

tensely, "Well, that's the end of it then."

"I'm going, Tilton," Hamilton said softly.

I knew, once again, that it was foolhardy, wrong, even a little mad. But now I had begun to see it his way. And my own itch for adventure was strong. "All right," I said firmly. "We'll go."

We crossed the bridge, the five of us, and started up the gorge. The whole area was seemingly deserted, but Tibet is an amazing country—a land without telephone or telegraph, but word somehow moves quickly. We had just stopped for lunch when, from over a low ridge, horsemen appeared.

We awaited them tensely—but these were Tibetans, not Chinese.

It was the usual lama, bespectacled and very polite. He squatted Tibetan style to drink the tea we offered, while his three armed and murderous-looking soldier-escorts stood aside. A Sherpa did the translating and the conversation went on for many minutes. But from the first, the lama was adamant. We must go back. We must leave Tibet, immediately.

Explanations, argument were useless. In the end, we said we would go back.

After they left, clattering down the gorge, Hamilton made his last attempt. "Tilton, what's to prevent us going on, once they're out of sight?"

"Don't be a fool. They found us once, they'll do it again. Only next time they will not be so polite."

"Bara sahib." It was Da Nangyal, one of the Sherpas. He had talked to one of the escorting soldiers. "They say Chinese soldiers at Kyerong Dzong. Only two hours ride."

That settled it. We must get back to the Nepal side as quickly as possible. But darkness fell just before we reached the bridge and topping the last rise Da Nangyal, who was in the lead, stopped. "Sahib. See."

From the darkness ahead winked the lights of many fires. The shadows of men moved among them and in the calm night air, voices were audible.

"Tibetan?"

"No, sahib."

"Hamilton!" I called softly.

His voice answered from quite close. "I heard. What do we do?"

"I don't relish a stay in a Communist prison," I said. "Especially a Tibetan one."

"You think that's certain?"

"We're American and British. We're on the wrong side of the border. They certainly won't let us walk through to the bridge."

ELIZABETH'S frightened voice broke in. "But the American authorities—the British—surely they wouldn't allow——"

"Mrs. Hamilton, it would be a long time before they even knew we were missing. Let alone before they found us."

"What else can we do?" Hamilton asked quietly.

"There's one thing—if you're up to it. We can turn round and go back up the gorge, cross the glacier, and climb that wall of ice to the Langtang col. If the weather holds—we have a chance."

In the silence, her breath was like a sigh. "Oh, Richard! See what you've done."

"Whatever you say, Tilton." His voice was strong.

"It's your decision—yours and your wife's. The Sherpas and I will abide by it, either way."

There was only an instant's pause. "We'll go back."

Once again, we ascended the gorge, groping now, stumbling through the

darkness. After two agonizing hours I decided we were far enough to stop for a few hours' rest—we would need it.

We started again before dawn, moving up the canyon to the glacier, still on the Tibetan side. We would not be able to cross until we were almost opposite the col because of the steep, avalanche-swept cliffs on the other side. When dawn came, our situation was shown to be worse than we had thought. The weather was threatening, clouds veiled all the peaks around us. Then, in mid-morning, when we had nearly reached our crossing point—they came.

There were at least a dozen of them, spurring their horses hard up the sloping moraine, and we didn't have to be told who they were.

"Out on the ice!" I ordered. "We'll have to run for it."

It was dangerous, moving across that snow-covered, crevassed glacier so fast, without being roped. We could only pray that the snow was firm enough to hold us. We stumbled along through heavy drifts, making slow time, but managed to reach a point several hundred yards out before the soldiers came opposite us and dismounted. We didn't look back but in a moment the whine of bullets told us they were shooting. Luckily, it was at long range.

I WAS breaking trail in the front. Close with me were the Sherpas and Mrs. Hamilton. Her husband brought up the rear. Our breaths were rasping in our throats and the other side looked a long way off.

Then suddenly I heard a cry and turned to see Hamilton sprawled in the snow. Quickly we all turned back.

But he was struggling to his feet when we reached him.

"Richard!" the woman cried in a stricken voice.

"I'm all right," he gasped. "Just fell!"

But she was close to hysteria. "We've got to go back," she screamed. "We'll die! Tell them to stop shooting! We'll give up!"

He grasped her roughly. "Betty, stop it!"

"We've got to!" Then across the snow she screamed, "Stop! Stop! Oh, God, make them stop!"

"I said be quiet!" he commanded, and slapped her hard.

She quieted, dazed. Another bullet whined close.

"Come on," I said. "We're making a target."

Hamilton seemed all right. A little tired, that was all. In ten minutes, we reached the other side, crossed a snow bridge over the bergschrund and stopped for a breather at the bottom of the ice slope. The Chinese soldiers remained on the far side, watching curiously, perhaps waiting for us to give up so wild and hopeless a flight.

Hamilton leaned heavily against the ice. His wife was crying softly. "Be quiet, Betty," he commanded wearily.

"Are you all right, Hamilton?" I asked.

"Tired as hell, that's all."

"Can you go on now? The weather looks bad and we have to beat darkness. And no telling when they might decide to come over after us."

"Let's go."

"Richard—!" she pleaded softly.

"Sorry I had to strike you, Betty," he said quietly, almost tenderly. "You'll be all right now. Don't worry."

I handed him the rope. "You and Da Nangyal take the second rope. The other chap and I will handle Mrs. Hamilton."

"Right." Then, as he was tying in, he looked upwards and smiled wryly, hopelessly. "Funny. I wanted to climb the mountain. Now, this one little slope looks impossible to me."

You may say I should have been more discerning. I should have detected something in his voice. But we were in haste and under strain. We abandoned everything, packs, food, extra clothing. I led off, cutting steps in the hard ice. At first, progress was fairly good, but gradually the slope steepened, our noses came closer and

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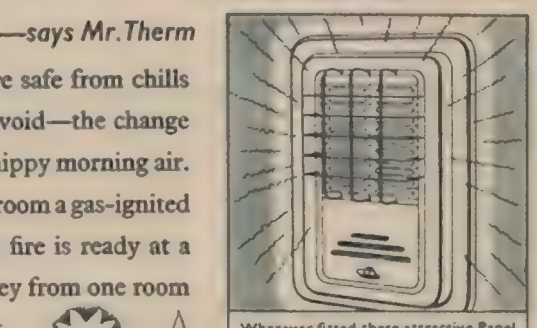

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closer to the wall. Finally, it was almost vertical, with occasional ledges and cracks for support.

It was as difficult and dangerous a climb as I have encountered in many years of climbing. But we were going amazingly well. Then—the storm struck. The wind rose and driving snow made visibility poor. It tore at us, threatening to wrench us from our precarious footing. Down through the mist I saw that Hamilton seemed to be having trouble and he and Da Nangyal were lagging behind. Then, when we were perhaps two-thirds of the way up, I heard a call from below.

I unroped after securing the others, and inched my way back down. I found Da Nangyal on a knob of ice—holding up an empty rope! We examined it. It hadn't broken, or been cut. It had simply been untied.

"There is blood," Da Nangyal pointed out.

Yes, the rope was bloodsoaked. He *had* been hurt. Shot, probably, and we hadn't seen it.

"He was getting weak," Da Nangyal said. "I had to pull him."

What had happened was clear. Weakening, Hamilton had understood that he could not make it, reasoned that he would jeopardize the whole party, that there was little chance of any of us making the top if we attempted to carry with us an injured man. So, he had simply untied his rope and. . . .

"I'm going down." I tied into the rope and slid down to the level he must have been on when he untied. There was nothing. Below, empty space yawned.

I was about to climb back to the others when I took one last look below, leaning far out from the wall, over a bulging overhang. Then I could see, perhaps twenty feet beneath me, where a great flake of ice had broken from the face, forming a narrow crevasse. Snow had filled it almost completely — but half-buried in the snow, I could see a dark form.

It was a devilish place to reach, but Da Nangyal and I, working together, reached it. Hamilton was unconscious, but still alive. And probably unhurt by the fall, for he had dropped straight down into the soft-piled snow.

It was an amazing rescue. Da Nangyal's work on that ice wall will live for ever in my memory. He roped the unconscious man to his back and then, with my help on the line from above, he carried the two hundred pound burden up that sheer precipice. I shall never forget the surge of relief and triumph when we came up into the col and saw the valley beyond bathed in brilliant sunlight. The storm was lifting.

NIGHT had fallen when, after hours of a gruelling race down the mountain, we got Hamilton to Langtang village and my reserve medical supplies. He was still alive. Better, his wound was not serious, and with plasma to replace the blood he had lost, and anti-biotics to prevent infection, all he needed was warmth, rest and nourishment. And perhaps one thing more.

I had finished my work. He was still unconscious, lying well bundled on a rough bed in the cold stone room the village head man had given us. He was breathing quietly but regularly, his face taking on colour again, under the flickering glow of the yak-oil lamp. I closed my pack and slumped to a chair, near exhaustion.

Elizabeth sat close to his head, staring. If I were exhausted, what must she be feeling? She had barely been able to crawl the last mile to the village and we, burdened with Hamilton, had not been able to help her. Now she seemed numb, almost unconscious.

"Why?"

It was the first word she had said to me in hours, the first question. I studied her for a moment before I spoke. She seemed not to notice; it was almost as if she had not meant the question to be answered. She looked older, depleted. But still lovely.

I told her what her husband had done. I don't think she had understood it all until then. But she didn't react, she only continued to stare fixedly at him. I suppose I should not have said it, but I'm only human, with a trace of vindictiveness of my own. "You were very nearly free of him," I reminded her quietly. "And he of you."

She turned to look at me then, but there was no anger in her face. It was bleak with suffering. She faltered, trying to speak. Finally she said, "I had already lost him—long ago."

Sudden compassion for her returned. "Perhaps not entirely," I replied. "And sometimes, the lost are found."

She turned back to him, her eyes searching his face yearningly. And her answer was barely audible. "Not now. Not ever." I watched the anguish working in her face. "You see—I don't deserve him. And he doesn't need me now."

At that moment, watching her—seeing her lovely face—the loneliness of the years descended upon me. My pipe lay unlit in my hand. "Every man," I said heavily, "needs love."

She didn't answer. I could see the tears glistening on her cheek.

"He has proved himself, all right," I said. "To his own mind, I am certain his act of courage saved him far more surely than anything we did."

Only her head moved slightly.

"It's an excellent prescription," I added gently. "For anyone. And sometimes, it takes more courage to be humble, to admit a mistake, and begin again."

Her hand went out and gently caressed back the matted hair from his forehead. He stirred in his coma, murmured something. It might have been her name, for she sank down slowly, and buried her face against his shoulder.

Man and woman. Husband and wife.

I WENT out and stood in the cold night air. The village was quiet, the stone houses ghostly in the brilliant moonlight. I could see the prayer flags flapping darkly against the sky as a fitful breeze moved up the valley. And behind them towered the glistening ice of Lirung. The Langtang. I had seen it at last. And I would always remember it.

The air was refreshing. My exhaustion was gone and in its place a simple, pleasant weariness. One pipe and I'd find my sleeping sack.

It was going to be a good trip after all.

THE END

Consider your verdict

by

RUSSELL SCOTT, LL.B.

A FINE elm grew in Mr. Arbor's front garden. The tree was over a hundred years old and, unknown to Arbor, a disease had attacked its roots, although there were no signs of this above the ground.

The elm's crown of foliage was considerable, and in summer it cast a good shade. During the winter months, Arbor arranged to have it topped.

A few days before the contractor arrived to carry out the work, a gust of wind caught the tree, and it fell across the road on to Mrs. Epping's car as she drove by. Her car was wrecked; she was injured and had to spend some weeks in hospital.

Clearly, the rotten roots had caused the tree to topple, and Mrs. Epping sued Arbor, claiming that the tree had been a "nuisance" and that he had been negligent. In court, she told the judge: "Arbor had a duty not to cause injury to passers-by. He should have had the tree topped sooner.

"Also, because it was so close to the road, he should have been doubly careful to see that there was nothing wrong with the tree.

"The diseased roots were a source of danger to people using the road, and that danger should have been removed."

"The crown on the elm was large, but not abnormal," said Arbor in his defence. "And how was I to know that the roots were diseased? The tree was inspected from time to time, and appeared to be perfectly normal in all respects. It would be unfair to saddle me with a liability to discover dangers which it would have been impossible to know about unless I dug the tree out."

What is your verdict? For the judge's decision, turn to page 34

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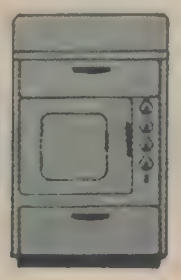

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A CURE FOR SERPENTS

Continued from page 19

to scorn the noble Hajj Ahmed. Jemberié's ideas about diseases and remedies were more or less those of a primitive man. He was convinced that a stroke of lightning could make a woman pregnant, that a man became impotent if he touched a chameleon. When he had a headache, he opened the vein across his forehead and, bending over a basin, let the blood flow until the headache ceased. He first began to respect medical science when he found that a white powder relieved his headache without any blood-letting.

Nor indeed could Mohamed, for all his training as a nurse in the hospital at Tripoli, afford to scoff at Hajj. Once, when I had to examine him for a mild bronchitis, I had found tied under his armpit a small leather case. It contained a strip of paper on which was written a line of the Koran—to keep away malignant spirits. Mohamed was extremely mortified, and for several days turned his head away whenever I looked at him.

Civilians Were Pioneers

Misurata was not my first post in Tripolitania. I had left Italy for North Africa in 1924, two years previously, to take up the position of physician at Buerat el Hsun, one of the coastal stations in the region administered by my friend, the Duke of Puglie, who later became H.R.H. the Duke of Aosta. In those days, our colonies were interesting places, either because Rome had not yet made any attempt to regulate the lives of the inhabitants, or because, seeing that there were no prospects of easy and rapid enrichment, the Italians who went there were few, and endowed with unusual qualities. There were not many colonial civil servants and in general, officials were drawn from other departments and from the armed forces; to a large extent they were men of unimpeachable honesty.

Many of those whom the regular civil servants and the army called civilians were at that time pioneers in the real sense of the word—professional men, tradesmen, artisans, who succeeded in making lives for themselves on the desert shores of Libya, and formed the nucleus of the Italian population.

Buerat el Hsun was a coastal station, caught between deserts of sea and sand. There was no local population and the nearest Bedouin tents were about eighty miles away. But although we were isolated, we were certainly not lonely. Along the shore stretched the tents of the married quarters of a desert unit; a hundred Italian soldiers and a company of Eritrean Askaris constituted the military garrison. Occasionally a troop of *sawari* [native soldiery] in transit halted for a while; less often the Gina, an ancient little steamer and relic of the Ottoman Navy, dropped anchor offshore, bringing us provisions, letters from Italy and gossip from Tripoli.

People Respected Drugs

As the official medical officer of the family encampment which stretched along the shore, I found no lack of patients, and the various aspects of native life provided me with ample material for study. The camp was composed of people from every corner of Libya—for the most part women and children. Practically the whole gamut of tropical pathology was represented in the camp, and the medical work was intensely interesting.

The desert people had great respect for medicines and drugs. Pills, powders and decoctions possessed for them a magic which could not fail to cure them. But their greatest veneration was reserved for the knife which "cut out the pain" and for the syringe which immediately "put the lost health back into the blood." Accustomed to being treated with fire-balls, scarifications and blood-letting, they found modern medical methods tame, and were astonished at the results.

The unexpected cures engendered a blind faith which sometimes tore at the heartstrings. I remember the mother who, on a night of Ramadan, held out to me in mute appeal the body of her dead son, expecting me to bring him to life again. Another time, I was at the bedside of an old woman who was dying. The eyes of her daughters were fixed on me, expecting a miracle, and when I repeated to them the words of the Koran: "All is sent from Allah," they calmly replied: "And healing also"—meaning that, as the physician is Allah's instrument, healing can be bestowed, however grave the malady.

To the Moslem, it is Allah who allows the physician to cure a patient when he, Allah, has decided that he shall recover. It is this, of course, which gives the physician his privileged status in Islamic society.

All the women of the camp doted on their children, illustrating to perfection the old Arab proverb which says that in the eyes of its mother a cockroach is a gazelle. The children were dirty, unkempt and ragged, and the most elementary rules of hygiene were neglected — but, nevertheless, their mothers were their most humble, willing slaves.

I never detected any difference between the treatment of boys and of girls; their mothers worshipped them irrespective of sex, and were as worried over the girls as over the boys when they were ill, though in their attitude to the latter, there was, perhaps, already something of that subjection to the male sex which Islam imposes on its women.

They were proud of their daughters' beauty, and would talk of how the men would fight for them in later years; and in the precocious exploits of their sons they detected with satisfaction the future bandit, the terror of the caravans.

One old woman of the camp informed me one day that she had five sons, and that all were in jail—three in Tunisia and two in Tripoli. "So you see," she confided to me, "all my sons are true Rogebans. Do you know what happens when we Rogeban women give birth? When the pains begin, they remove our ear-rings, bracelets, rings and necklaces—otherwise the child would make off with them as soon as he was born! Our lads are strong. Ask anyone. Anyone will tell you about the Rogebans!"

A Coquette Aged Six

Of the children in the camp, one of the most delightful was Selima ben Nuri et-Turk, a daughter of one of the garrison's native n.c.o.s. At the age of six, she already possessed all the grace and coquetry of a woman. Her elegance, when she presented herself at the dispensary for a course of injections which I had prescribed, was quite breath-taking. She was always adorned with such a galaxy of harmonious colours that she looked like some wondrous, exotic bird.

There were the pale blue trousers embroidered with darker blue, puffed *sirwal* clasped into gold anklets, spotless white blouse under a long, green velvet jacket called a *stamoulina*, embroidered with silver and reaching to the knees—all this finery beneath a pink and yellow *holy* which covered her from head to foot. A touch of rouge at the level of her cheek bones gave warmth to her amber skin, and her grandmother told me that the child had given them no rest until she had been allowed to wear her mother's own necklace of gold coins, and to spray herself with scent when she visited the Christian doctor, for she

Consider your verdict

IN the case on page 32, the judge said that Arbor had a duty to take such precautions as any reasonable householder would take, to prevent the elm from causing injury. In this case, since the disease was not apparent or easy to discover, and because the tree appeared healthy, with a crown that—fortunately for Arbor—was not unduly large, there was no liability on him. Mrs. Epping lost her case. (*This is the probable verdict, based on actual cases.*)

"Thank you so much for having him—I can see that he's enjoyed every minute of it"

was a little nervous of the *tebib* and wished to make a good impression.

On entering the dispensary, the six-year-old Selima would pause ceremoniously on the threshold and make a low bow, to which I replied with equal solemnity, subsequently inviting her to climb on to the bed. While I busied myself removing the pieces of the syringe from the sterilizer, and unwinding the gauze in which they were wrapped, she would remove her *haik*, loosen her trousers with the utmost dignity, and clamber on to the bed, dropping her sandals with a curious sound like the beating of a bird's wing.

Girl Did Not Flinch

If the old Negress who accompanied her attempted to help her, Selima, with the proud and fretful air of a weary sultana, would dismiss her with the words, "Leave me, creature!"

By the time I approached the bed, the sultana would be lying face downwards with a minute triangle of skin visible between the folds of the green velvet *stambulina* and the silver belt of the lowered trousers. She did not flinch as the needle penetrated the flesh, or as the syringe emptied: only a convulsive contraction of the bare feet betrayed the pain.

She was completely dressed again almost before I had finished washing the syringe, standing before me enveloped once more in her pink and yellow *holy*.

"May Allah be with you, my father."

"Allah's blessing on you, princess."

As she reached the threshold, she paused in answer to my last ceremonial salutation, drew a corner of her *haik*, smiled and gravely departed.

When the younger women wished to consult me at the dispensary, modesty compelled them to bring someone with them—either their children, mother or a woman friend. They arrived in groups, chattering and pushing their children in front of them. They entered, murmured a greeting and sat on the floor in the waiting-room, their *haiks* drawn across their faces, to leave only one eye visible, but missing nothing that went on.

They all started by being reluctant to undress. When I asked them to remove their clothes, they looked appealingly at the nurse, their mother or their mother-in-law, as though calling upon them to witness that the sacrifice of their modesty was being forced upon them. However, once their virtue had been properly affirmed, they offered no further resistance, and after undressing lay naked on the bed, covering their faces (that last defence of the virtuous woman) with hands entangled in a chemise.

I remember one day being asked by an old soldier named Busnina to visit his wife, Farha, who was unwell in her tent. Busnina now acted as a sort of mayor of the encampment, although in the domestic field he was quite unable to impose his authority over his young and capricious wife or over his shrewd and autocratic mother-in-law.

Busnina's was a military bell tent sustained by a single central pole, and high enough to stand up in. Here, with her mother, I found Farha completely covered in her *haik*, huddled on the floor with her back to the central pole and looking more than anything else like a bundle of old clothes. Her husband sat in front of her, and between them was a cushion for me.

The three ritual cups of tea having been consumed, some camp gossip exchanged and a cigarette smoked, the formal part of my visit was accomplished, and it was time to pass on to professional matters. But the patient did not wish the Christian *tebib* to touch her, and she refused categorically to uncover her face.

Farha was a fanatical Moslem and, although she uttered no word, the gestures of a hand through the folds of her *haik* made abundantly clear her refusal to have anything to do with me.

Husband Was Delighted

In vain her mother tried to persuade her to allow herself to be examined. "O Farha, my daughter, here is the doctor come especially for you, and you do not wish him to see you. But why? Do you not wish to be cured? Must your mother continue to weep for your lost health, my treasure?"

The husband added his exhortations. He had been secretly delighted with his wife's exemplary modesty, but now her continued refusal to obey him seemed like an affront to his marital authority.

"But this is the *tebib*," he insisted. "The *tebib* is our father. Do you not see how many white hairs he has? Allah has given him wisdom, and the years have brought him experience. He will certainly cure you."

But even the allusions to my

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"I'm always telling him to delegate more of his work to the people under him, but I keep forgetting—there aren't any people under him"

physical decay were powerless to move the woman. By this time she had hidden herself completely in her garments and confined herself to shaking her head obstinately.

"But how can he cure you if he does not see you?" cried Busnina, beginning to lose his temper. "I am your husband, and it is I who command you to uncover yourself, Allah grant me patience!"

Farha only shrugged her shoulders disdainfully; then, leaning suddenly towards her husband, she hissed through her veil. "And how much did the Nazarene pay you to see my face?"

When Busnina grasped his wife's meaning his face turned quite black. For a moment he remained as if turned to stone, and then, raising his enormous hand, he aimed a blow at his wife that would certainly have broken her neck if it had reached her. But Farha was quicker than he; she ducked and her husband's hand passed over her head, catching the tent pole fair and square just where one section fitted into the next. Before we realized what was happening, the whole structure was about our ears, and we were buried in a mountain of tent cloth.

After frantic efforts to extricate myself from the enveloping canvas, to disentangle my feet from the ropes, and find a way out over cases, cushions, water bottles, mats, saddles and carpets, without burning myself on the cinders from the overturned stove, I eventually emerged into the open.

People came running from all corners of the camp. Busnina, raving and shouting that he would strangle his wife, was being held back by the men, while the women shepherded mother and daughter into an empty tent, where I joined them.

Mother Looked Amused

The mother still retained her autocratic air, but was unable to control her amusement. Farha, her *haik* gone, and now dressed in only a very low-necked shift, with her hair tumbling over her forehead and neck, was helpless with laughter.

"Busnina is so jealous," her mother whispered to me. "You can't imagine what trouble there would have been if the poor girl had acted otherwise!" Then she raised her voice, cast a tender look at her daughter, and said: "There, now you can examine her in peace. And you will give her some medicine, will you not? Look at her, *tebib*—is she not a true daughter of the Kerughli?"

Farha, half-naked, huddled on the mat, kept her eyes downcast. But she was watching me out of the corner of her eye, and the shadow of a smile flitted across her mouth.

In 1926, I left Buerat el Haun and set up a dispensary farther along the coast in Misurata, where I met the remarkable Hajj Ahmed. In those days, Misurata was almost entirely cut off from its hinterland. The revolt of the Arabs was recent and still smouldering, and only a few miles away there were tribes which had not yet submitted to the government and were sitting on the fence wondering which way to jump.

In Misurata there were bullet marks on the walls of many of the houses. The regular clients of the town's only bar recalled days not long before, when they were obliged to enter the premises on all fours to avoid the attentions of the solitary sniper perched on the top of a palm tree in the oasis.

Commander Was Cunning

A few at a time, the scattered inhabitants returned to the town and the number of patients presenting themselves at the dispensary grew daily. It was quite a different clientèle from that at Buerat el Haun: it was composed for the most part of men—nearly all Arabs—either from the town or belonging to wandering tribes.

Complete calm now reigned in the area immediately surrounding the town. Our military commander was an old colonial of vast experience. Like the old African fox that he was, he despised no stratagem which might bring over to the government's side the neutral tribes in the pastures of the no-man's-land area. He knew, too, how to use the work of the medical officer in this operation of slow persuasion.

One tribe which had given a lot of trouble was the Qouafi—a sprawling tribe who wandered deep in the hinterland between the mountains and the coast. Although they had avoided fighting openly against us, and it was now eight months since they had taken any part in the rebellion, they were a bellicose and turbulent people.

Little was known about them, and on the official maps, the word Qouafi appearing on the various pasturage areas was always followed by a question mark. Some informants had met prominent members of the tribe almost at the gates of Misurata, while others asserted that they had seen their camels as far away as Scemoch, well over a hundred miles from the coast.

One day I received an urgent summons to headquarters. A message had been sent by the head of the Qouafi to say that his only daughter was ill, and asking that a doctor be sent immediately with everything necessary to restore her to health.

I went, of course. The rainy

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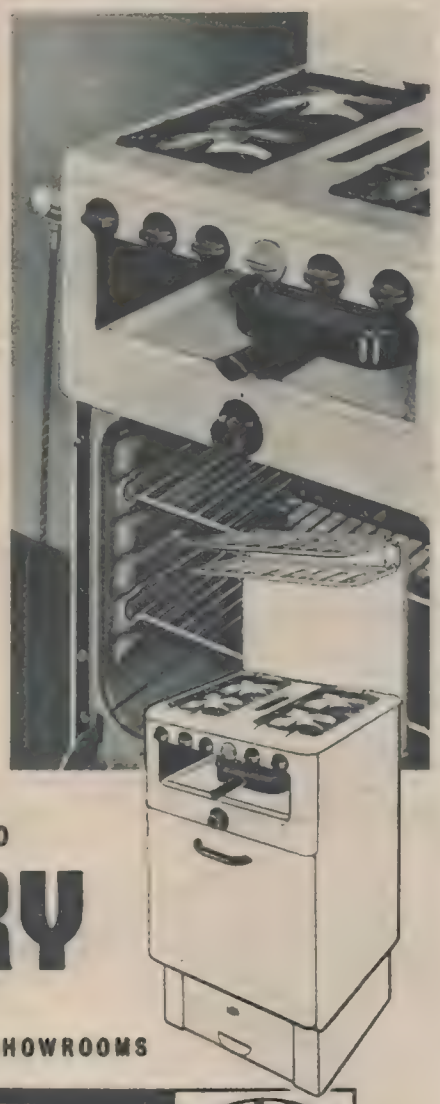

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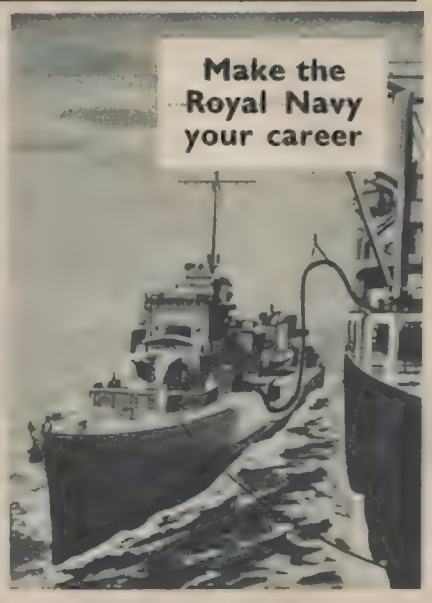

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After the day's work . . .

At six o'clock just look at your eyes: strained, tired and dull. Nothing so surely spoils your good looks. Quick! Bathe your eyes with Optrex. Ah! What a relief! At once your eyes feel fresh again — for Optrex relieves congestion and eye-strain, prevents inflammation and infection, and has a wonderfully bracing and tonic effect on your eyes.

Now look in your mirror. The sparkle is back once more! You look out on the world with eyes clear, cool and calm. Does that make a difference to your charm? Well, what do you think? And remember that regular use of Optrex helps by its tonic action, to prevent those little wrinkles which so age a face.

A wise precaution: whether you wear glasses or not, you should have your eyes examined at regular intervals by a Qualified Practitioner.

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season was just over and the scent of jasmine rose from the dry walls and gibbet-like well-heads; the palm trees stood dark and clear against the cloudless night sky as my little caravan moved out of the oasis of el Majoub Zaouyèt. At first there was not a glimmer of light in the east, but after some miles the sun rose suddenly and in the distance, flooded with honey-coloured light among palm trees, we saw the tents of the Qouafi.

The deep, dawn silence was suddenly broken by the braying of a donkey and the barking of dogs and, between two sand dunes, figures dwarfed by the distance and indistinct in the golden morning mist began to move about the wells.

Man Gripped By Fear

I was shown to a Bedouin tent where I found a girl lying flat on her back, her glazed, dark-ringed eyes, in which the night's delirium still flickered, staring unseeing into space. Every now and again the word "water" came from her cracked lips.

The mother was bending over her, watching every breath and movement; she gripped my hands and arms with a force that surprised me in such a thin and apparently fragile woman.

I had never met the chief of the Qouafi, but I knew that he was reputed to be an aggressive and violent character. At that moment, there stood beside me only a man bowed down and stripped of all pride, a man in the grip of fear, who started at every sound, and who watched in anguish where his daughter lay, prostrate between life and death.

The mother had turned back the girl's *haik* and tucked it under her armpits, but in her feverish tossing, unable to bear the heat, the patient had thrown off the covering. Her hair was soaked with sweat and, as she tossed her head, the braids loosened and scattered the amulets worn as protection against the evil eye.

I called her by name: "Fattûma, Fattûma. . . ."

She fixed her eyes on me and murmured: "*Râsi yugia fiha* [my head hurts]."

Her chest was marked with small, rose-red spots, and she groaned when I sounded it with my fingers, shuddering at the contact of my cold ear on her skin.

The mother whispered to me that during the last few days, the girl had lost a lot of blood from the nose. How was it, she asked, that the evil spirits had not also departed, together with all that blood?

I was able to establish only a very fragmentary case history, but it seemed fairly certain that the evil spirit in this instance was the Eberth bacillus. There among the Qouafi camels, it was not possible to carry out a laboratory test, but I had little doubt that the girl was suffering from typhoid or paratyphoid fever.

It was seven o'clock in the morning, and the under-arm temperature was ninety-nine point four, from which I deduced that the disease was probably in the second week. Should I attempt the only treatment—a drastic one—that might arrest it? Again I examined the girl from head to foot. The heart seemed in excellent condition, and a summary analysis convinced me that the kidneys were functioning satisfactorily. We would try.

Seated on the edge of the mat, I felt the girl's arms to see which one would be better to use for the operation. I could feel the father's breath on my hair as, tense and watchful, he followed my every movement. The mother's eyes were fixed on me.

Mohamed tied a rubber band round the arm I indicated. The vein protruded under pressure, and I dabbed the copper-coloured skin with iodine. A syringe full of clear protein solution was ready; I stuck the needle into the vein and the blood flowed into the syringe, turning the contents red. I pressed the pump, and the liquid became white again and, while Mohamed untied the band, flowed slowly, carefully, into the vein, leaving an opaque patina in the syringe.

"And now?" asked the father while I washed my hands outside the tent.

"Now there will be a high, a very high, fever," I replied, adding in answer to his troubled, bewildered look, "and the fever, if it is Allah's will, will cure her."

The chief bowed his head: "Allah is compassionate and merciful."

The hours passed, and the fever mounted with exasperating slowness. By five in the afternoon, it was little more than a hundred. After sunset, however, the first sudden rise set in, and at ten o'clock her temperature touched a hundred and four.

As I sat on the floor, I could feel the eyes of the mother and father drilling the back of my neck. Behind them were the servants, and the tent was filled with a low murmur of prayer.

At midnight, the thermometer registered a hundred and five point two. The girl's body was jerking convulsively up and down. The skin had become lifeless: it gave no reflection in the light of the lamps.

Suddenly, the crisis was reached.

The pulse became less tumultuous, the arteries less turgid. Beads of sweat broke out on the forehead, and the skin of the body began to shine and to become soft and wet. Rivers of sweat poured from the neck, under the arms, down over the breasts, gathering in the hollow of the stomach. The mat on which she lay had to be changed and she had to be moved to another corner of the tent, because even the ground underneath her was soaked.

The chief tried to help, but the women pushed him out of the way into a corner: he was more hindrance than help, staggering about like a blind man, with a stunned expression on his face.

Fever Did Not Recur

At six in the morning, the temperature had dropped to ninety-six point four.

The fever did not recur during the next four days, and when I declared the daughter to be out of danger, the mother wept silently but the father kept his eyes on the floor and then suddenly raised his head, spread out his hands, palms upward as though they carried an open book, and in a voice suffocating with emotion, recited a prayer of thanksgiving.

Allah had willed that his daughter should live, and five camels waited before my tent to conduct me back to the city.

Three years later, when I was again in Misurata, there was a sequel to this story.

We were nearing the end of August, the hottest time of the year, when the wind blowing up from the south seems to come from an open furnace. My

Do not miss next week's JOHN BULL, in which Keith Ellis writes a frank profile of

DIANA DORS

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WHO'S WHO?

They look alike, but their lives have been very different. From the details below, can you provide each woman with her potted biography—and her name? The answers are on page 42.

BORN:
A. Thirty-five years ago in Reigate, Surrey, daughter of an engineer.
B. Twenty-four years ago in Melbourne, Australia, daughter of an aircraft expert.

FIRST JOB:
C. Winning a radio talent contest.
D. A choreographic snowflake.

HAS SAID:
E. "I see no reason to believe that an art that has flourished so long and taken such a firm root should decline within the next generation."
F. "The lure of something difficult is a lure that cannot be resisted, however hard you try to hold out. If I could succeed in London, I knew I could succeed anywhere."

FAMOUS FOR:
G. Her zither and come-hither singing.
H. Being the West's greatest ballerina.

man-servant, Jemberié, shook me, and continued to shake me, until I was properly awake. The darkened room throbbed with the heat, and the pitiless afternoon sun filtered through the shutters, throwing a streak of light on the dusty air.

"Outside an Arab."

I was still sleepy and did not grasp what Jemberié was saying. "An Arab? Couldn't you have told him to wait until five o'clock?"

"He say me he cannot wait."

"But what does he want? Is he ill?"

"He quite very well."

By this time, sleep had fled. I told Jemberié to show in this Arab who appeared to be in such a hurry.

A Bedouin entered, tall and lean, wrapped in a kind of *burnous* widening over the shoulders and falling like a hood down the back. At a sign from me, he sat on the floor in the middle of the room while I remained looking down on him from my vantage point on the edge of the bed.

He seemed young, with delicate features and large, dark, velvety eyes, but his otherwise adolescent face was transformed into that of a warrior by the hooked nose, lean cheeks and jutting chin.

After the first greetings he fell silent. From time to time he lifted his eyes, caught mine for an instant and immediately lowered his own again, repeating timidly: "*Kef alek?* [How are you?]"

When I replied that I was well, he placed his outspread hand on his breast and muttered: "Allah be praised." Finally, he made an effort and started to speak. He spoke hurriedly, in a low voice, keeping his eyes half closed, as though reciting something he had learned by heart, and feared to forget a word or phrase.

The chief of the Qouafi, he said, sent his greetings, he sent many greetings and prayed that Allah would have me in his keeping and prosper me.

When I questioned him, the boy raised his eyes and replied in his normal voice; being no longer the mouthpiece of his chief, he could resume his ordinary tone.

No, he did not belong to the Qouafi tribe; he was a Sirtic nomad; his name was Ali, son of Hajj Mansûr, son of Abubekri, son of Hajj Idris, son of Said el Màlek. He threw in the four generations in a perfectly natural manner, in order to indicate that he was not a nobody, but a "son of the great tents."

After this, he relapsed again into his recital: the chief of the Qouafi sent me greetings and his blessing; the chief of the Qouafi was my son. . . .

I interrupted him again to ask where the chief of the Qouafi was, what he was doing, how he was.

The chief of the Qouafi was with his people in the Bu Reya pasturage; the chief of the Qouafi was well (more praises to Allah who protected him and kept him in good health).

The voice became less monotonous and faltered a little: the chief of the Qouafi had a daughter, and he sent me a letter. . . .

Recalled Girl's Eyes

I was not listening to him any longer. As I sat staring, unseeing, at the flies circling round and round in the streak of sunlight, my mind had slipped back into the past. Until that moment I had completely forgotten those ten days spent among the Qouafi in the pastures of el Majoub Zaouyèt. And now, two words from this Bedouin had recalled the whole scene. I saw again the large, fevered eyes of Fattûma. I remembered the desperate, hunted look of the chief, and heard again the toneless voice of the mother, speaking to me in monosyllables.

I wondered what had happened to Fattûma. Perhaps she was ill and her father wanted me to see her again—for Ali ben Hajj Mansûr, observing that I was preoccupied with my own thoughts, was now patiently repeating that the chief of the Qouafi had a daughter and that he sent me a letter. . . .

He handed it to me. It was written in the hand of a teacher of the Koran. The signature of the chief, in a corner, was almost illegible, but his seal made the message authentic. It read:

"Greetings to our Lord Pirajno the physician. May Allah have him in his keep. Amen.

"With regard to the following, so that your health is good by the mercy of Allah and his blessing, we ask a good word from you by your grace.

"Who brings you this is our honoured friend Ali of the Ulad Sleiman, son of the pilgrim Mansûr, Allah protect him. Now he desires to marry my daughter who is our only issue. We are satisfied and may Allah's will be done.

"But although Allah gave us a daughter, he also permitted you to give her a second life when death was upon her. So we ask that you listen to the request and tell us if the prayer for the betrothal may be said. We wait for your decision. And Allah be with you."

Touched To The Heart

I looked up to find our honoured friend Ali, son of the pilgrim Mansûr, watching me with an anxious expression, endeavouring to read my thoughts. He could not guess just what those thoughts were.

For I was touched to the heart. What caliph, I thought, what sultan of the Thousand and One Nights, had ever rewarded his physician in a more princely manner?

Ali ben Hajj Mansûr left with my consent to his marriage and a pair of silver bracelets for Fattûma's ankles I went with him to the door, and with difficulty disengaged my hands, which he kissed with vehement gratitude. When all the various formulae of blessing had been exhausted, he leaped on to his horse, and I watched him disappear in a swirl of dust which remained suspended above the road like a cloud of gold.

NEXT WEEK: My adventures among the Tuareg Arabs—"the veiled people." "A Cure For Serpents," by Alberto Denti, will be published in May as a book by André Deutsch Ltd., at 16s.

The ring of truth—
which never came!

"LOVELY party. Met Richard. Ringing me tomorrow at seven." That was the happy entry in Carol's diary three months ago.

And regularly as clockwork, every night that they were not out together, Richard rang. Until one night, seven o'clock struck and the telephone did not ring. No call the next night, nor the night after. Carol was too proud to demand an explanation. Richard was too shy to tell her the simple truth—that her bad breath was spoiling their romance.

THE REASON

Carol should have wondered why she started every day with a stale, rough taste in her mouth: the "morning mouth" that means bad breath! The reason is simple.

While we sleep, tiny food particles decay in the crevices of teeth and gums, and give off a pungent odour. This "morning mouth," or bad breath, can last *right through to the evening* unless it is dealt with effectively.

Mentasol is the answer. Its water-soluble chlorophyll penetrates to even the most remote spots where food particles lurk, and counteracts putrefaction. Within seconds, bad breath is stopped, and stopped for hours.

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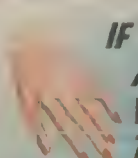

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Chloro-Yeast

Is MORE than Yeast!

ENTER A YOUNG LADY

Continued from page 21

even managed to send them sometimes when he was in the navy. . . .

The taxi was caught in another jam halfway along Piccadilly. Evan finished wiping off his make-up with his handkerchief. A girl. . . . The important thing now was to keep Madeleine from guessing how disappointed he was. That would take some pretty good acting. Madeleine was no ordinary audience, and she knew him so well. But he could do it.

There had always been a touch of good-natured rivalry in their joint appearances, in *The Taming Of The Shrew, Romeo And Juliet, Pygmalion.* Here, he thought slyly, was a golden opportunity to prove his superiority—without ever letting her know.

There would never be another Evan Taylor on the London stage. There had been one for four generations, and whatever it had meant to the London stage, it was useless to pretend that it hadn't meant a good deal to the present Evan Taylor. Brought up on his father's notices, his grandfather's memory, and his great-grandfather's reputation, Evan had probably been more irretrievably destined for the stage than anyone ever born before in Britain. And he had always assumed he would some day be teaching a fifth Evan Taylor to find his way about that fantastic piece of carpentry and poetry his ancestors had trod so illustriously.

He and Madeleine had always promised each other they'd have lots of children—till they discovered it wasn't so simple. They had, in fact, reached the point of fearing that they were doomed to childlessness when it had finally happened.

There was nothing unusual about the situation according to the doctor—just one of those things. But, considering their ages, the doctor had admitted it did look as though this would be their only child. A girl. . . .

The taxi swung round the corner and pulled up in front of the nursing home.

Evan ran inside to the reception desk. Behind it sat a trim young girl in white who, at the sight of Evan, jumped to her feet. "Oh, Mr. Taylor!" In her hand she held a notebook. He understood without being asked, and, taking the notebook from her, hastily scrawled, "With Best Wishes. Evan Taylor."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Taylor!" she exclaimed. "I suppose you know all about the news."

"Yes, thanks," he said shortly. He knew the way to the room. A nurse, just emerging, was gently closing the door.

"May I go in?"

"Oh, Mr. Taylor! Yes, but only for a minute. She's very tired."

Madeleine was quiet as he tiptoed in, but she turned and smiled drowsily. Her curls, whose red-gold still did not need the chemist's touch, framed her delicate face on the pillow.

"How nice," she murmured as he set the flowers on the table at her bedside. He bent and kissed her. "You heard?" she asked.

He nodded.

"Pleased?"

"Tickled pink." He smiled happily. "So clever of you, darling."

She smiled with scarcely disguised self-satisfaction. Understandable, of course, he thought.

"When did you hear?" she asked.

"End of the third act. I took only a couple of curtain calls. Nothing had happened yet at the end of the second."

A FAINT wrinkle appeared in Madeleine's face, as if she were calculating something. "Odd," she said, as if to herself. A certain look appeared in the beautiful eyes gazing up at him. It was the look which Madeleine always used when they were alone on stage in the second act climax of *Man And Superman.*

"Disappointed?" she asked warily.

"Disappointed!" he exclaimed. "I should say not! What a ridiculous idea!"

"But what if there is never another Evan Taylor on the London stage?" she whispered.

"What of it?" he said stoutly. "Who cares?"

Was he fooling her? He felt a trifle uneasy. He probably had talked too much about that family tradition business.

At this moment the nurse put her head in the door. "Mr. Taylor, would you like to come along to the nursery?"

Grateful for the interruption, he bent to kiss Madeleine again. "Well, I'm off to see our little ingénue. I'll bet she's as beautiful as you are." Congratulating himself on his finesse, he followed the nurse down the corridor. Madeleine was smiling as he left. She was convinced. Evan Taylor had chalked up another acting triumph.

In the nursery Evan found himself staring down into a cot containing a sleeping baby. He read the sign on the end of the cot: "Baby Girl Taylor."

Suddenly he found himself holding his breath as the nurse picked the baby up; surely anything so small and fragile shouldn't be handled so casually. Then his attention focused on the baby. . . . The long eyelashes that lay against her cheek, the soft, vulnerable mouth, the reddish-gold down of her hair—why, she actually did look like Madeleine! He stared and stared at his daughter, who lay there composed and ladylike. What stage presence!

It actually didn't matter that she wasn't a boy! He wouldn't have to act any more. He had fallen in love.

"Mr. Taylor," the nurse said, "are you only interested in girls?"

He glanced at her. She was pointing to another cot. His mouth fell open as he read the sign at the foot: "Baby Boy Taylor." This one, red and wrinkled-looking, was crying angrily, little fists flailing. "Why, didn't you know there were twins?" the nurse was saying. "The boy arrived fifteen minutes after the girl."

Madeleine! On top of everything else she had out-acted him! The nurse was stunned to see the urbane and worldly Evan Taylor, starting back down the corridor to his wife's room, break into a run. THE END

It's The Custom . . . in SCARBOROUGH

Old clothes are best wear for the Skipping. Spills are common

The town goes skipping on Shrove Tuesday

IT's not only the young girls of Scarborough who take part in the town's yearly Skipping Festival. Thousands of men and women of all ages throng the Foreshore Road on the South Bay during the afternoon of Shrove Tuesday and join in the fun.

"A year or two back, Maud Clark was skipping, and she is well over seventy," says Irene Prosser, a friendly, red-haired woman who, with her husband, runs one of Scarborough's seafront winkle stalls.

Spills and bruises are common at the Skipping, especially when the fisher lads take long lengths of mooring rope as thick as a man's fist and stretch them across the road with two boys at each end. "It needs four strong youngsters to get those ropes turning," says Herbert Welbourn, chief assistant at the Scarborough Public Library. Welbourn takes his small daughter, Judith, to the Skipping, and usually skips himself.

"A knock from one of those mooring ropes will send you head over heel," says trawler skipper Bill Scales. "I've been sent flying many a time."

Sometimes, a group of children will get strangers to skip, and then tighten the rope, tripping them.

The origins of the Skipping Festival are a mystery, even to Scarborough folk. No one knows for certain when it was started, or why. There are no organizers: the Festival just happens, as it has happened every Shrove Tuesday for a century, and probably for hundreds of years before that. Until recently, the Festival was a great time for top spinning and whipping, but this is not seen today.

Shrove Tuesday is a half-holiday in Scarborough. The banks close, and so do most of the shops. At noon, the Pancake Bell is rung from the town's museum to warn housewives that it's time to start in their kitchens. Then, after dinner, the people make their way to the Foreshore Road with their ropes, and the Festival begins.

"It's not so good for the digestion," says Irene Prosser, who has skipped on Shrove Tuesdays for the past thirty years. "The pancakes get well and truly tossed by the Skipping. But we all enjoy it. The children are dressed in old clothes, so their spills don't matter. They end as black as sweeps. Come to that, so do many of the adults."

REQUIEM FOR A WREN

Continued from page 13

began work in full strength to make a hard, a sloping concrete platform running down into the water where the flat bottomed landing craft could beach to refuel. On a bare beach nearby, a thousand navvies were camped making huge concrete structures.

Inland it was the same. Every wood was littered with dumps of shells and ammunition in little corrugated iron shelters, thousands and thousands of them spaced at regular intervals. There were radar stations upon Beaulieu Common and Bofors guns at Bucklers Hard. There was radio everywhere, the slim antennas pointing up from hedges, from haystacks, and from trucks. And over the whole countryside as winter merged into spring there was continuously the roar of aircraft, symbol of modern military power.

About the middle of March, Janet was waiting on the pier one morning with Sheila Cox and Doris Smith for a boat to take her down the river when Viola Dawson came running down the path.

"There's been an accident," she panted. "It's a beaching job. Get the L.C.P. started up quick. We've got to pick a party up at Needs Oar Point."

They were away at full speed down the river in a couple of minutes. As they went, Viola told them a tank was trapped under water by the Isle of Wight. Some of the crew were still inside, and probably drowned.

When they got to Needs Oar Point they saw three young marines waiting for them, a captain and two sergeants. Their arms were full of strange equipment, waterproof suits and packs holding metal cylinders. The young men scrambled on board. The officer said, "Open all the taps you've got. If we're quick enough there's just a chance we might get some of them out." He swung round to his sergeant. "Get that walkie-talkie going and let's know the form."

He went aft past the canopy to his men in the stern behind the engine. The two sergeants started to undress. The officer diverted his attention for a moment. "You girls, keep your eyes forward," he said.

In a few minutes, the two sergeants emerged in tight-fitting light rubber suits with rubber helmets tight around the face, and goggles pushed up on their foreheads.

THE officer came forward to the wheel where Viola was steering. "This is the form, Coxswain," he said. "An L.C.T. was landing a Sherman tank upon the beach. There's a hole in the beach or something, and the tank went right under. Everyone got out of it except the driver. He's in there still."

Viola asked, "When did this happen, sir?"

"Half an hour ago."

"He'll be dead, won't he?"

"Not necessarily." He was not disposed to talk. They were close now to the shore, and they could see a small disturbance in the surface of the water which was the turret of the tank awash, its thin wireless aerial sticking up on high. Viola steered for it, and felt her way gently until the bow grounded on the gun barrel; she held the craft there with a little engine. It was a delicate and skilful bit of seamanship.

The two frogmen were over the side in an instant, masks and goggles covering their faces and air bottles on their chests. One of them wormed down through the hatch while his comrade stayed waist-deep upon the flooded tank peering down into the turret.

Presently, he reached right down, head under water, and then the overalled body of the corporal driver appeared. The marine captain got over the side on to the tank, and helped manoeuvre the body of the driver to the L.C.P.

Janet and Sheila Cox took him and pulled him up on to the flat foredeck of the landing craft, and Janet rolled him over on to his face and began the motions she had learned at school for artificial respiration. He was a young

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man with a small moustache, in overalls, his face bluish white in colour, dead cold to the touch.

The three marines climbed on board again. They stood watching Janet as she worked rhythmically on the body. One of them said presently, "Dead, isn't he?"

She looked up. "I think he must be. Does anyone know how to do this? Am I doing it right?"

The officer said, "I think so. Go on as you're doing. Coxswain, take us in to the beach and we'll get him ashore."

Viola Dawson said, "I may not be able to get off again if I go in there, sir. The tide's falling pretty fast."

"Go on in," he said. "I'll make that right for you."

They went in, and the landing craft grounded some distance from the water's edge. Janet said, "Somebody else take a turn at this. I'm not doing any good."

The marine captain hesitated and then knelt down and took over the attempt at artificial respiration. Janet got up, only anxious to get away from the dead man she had been handling. She went aft to the stern where she came upon the two sergeants naked to the waist, in their rubber suits.

She said, "Oh, sorry." And then, "Have either of you got a cigarette?" She was very glad to be free of the chill deadness of the body on the fore-deck, and to be with live young men.

One of the sergeants, the fair-haired boy, said, "I've got some here." He passed up a packet and a box of matches to her as she sat upon the canopy.

She took them from him. "Thanks awfully. Go ahead—I won't look." She lit a cigarette from the packet with fingers that trembled a little, and blew a long cloud, and relaxed.

From the stern below her, where the men were dressing, the fair haired young man said, "Dead isn't he?"

"I should think so," she replied, without looking down at the speaker. "There wasn't a sign of anything."

The young man said, "Well, he was under water the best part of fifty minutes. There's no future in that."

She sat in the warm sun smoking, looking out over the blue sea. It was a warm day for March, the sort of day when the beach should have been associated with bathers, and small boats, and children making sand castles and paddling, instead of with waterlogged tanks and dead men.

The fair-haired sergeant—it was Bill—stood up by her and helped himself to one of his own cigarettes. He glanced towards the bow. "You did all that anyone could do," he said. "I don't think they're doing any good."

DINNER had been arranged for the marines and Wrens by the army at a gun station on the cliff half a mile away; Janet, Bill and the other sergeant, Bert Finch, walked up together and had dinner in a mess tent. Afterwards, they strolled back to the beach.

"Where are you stationed?" Janet inquired. "I didn't know about your party."

"We're at Cliffe Farm," Bill said. "I was over at your place the week before last, but I didn't see you."

She said, "I was probably down the river."

Something about his accent intrigued her. She asked, "Do you live in London?"

He shook his head. "I'm Australian."

She had thought he must be a Londoner because he seemed to have a slight cockney accent, and she was confused, not wanting to be rude. "I don't know why I thought that."

"It's the way I talk," he said. "Back at home people would say I hadn't got any Australian accent, but they know it all right, here."

"Have you been in England long?"

"I came over just before the war," he said, "after I left school. I was doing a course of agriculture when the war broke out. We've got a farm at home."

"What made you go into the marines?" she asked.

"More fun than the army," Bill replied. "More special jobs, like this sort of thing."

She knew too much about the service to ask specifically what he did when he wasn't pulling drowned men out of tanks.

Bill stayed with Janet all the afternoon and she was glad to have him; she found him an unassuming young man, easy to talk to. She admired him a little, too, for the instant courage that had sent him down into the interior of the flooded tank. She felt that his effort for the drowned man had been a good show, and she told him so.

Later, they sat smoking and chatting in the L.C.P. while the tide rose around them. Soon after six, she floated off, and Viola turned the boat and headed her for the Beaulieu River.

At Needs Oar Point, Janet said, "We've got a dance on Saturday. Why don't you two come over?"

That's how it all began.

As I sat there in my room at Coombargana, fingering the photographs, lost in memories, I thought how different everything would have been if Bill hadn't been killed. He would have come back to Coombargana directly the war was over, and almost certainly he would have brought Janet Prentice with him. They would have made a good pair to run the property after my parents' time.

Janet would have come to Coombargana as its mistress-to-be, not as its house-parlourmaid. Presently I would have to violate her privacy further to find out why she had come at all. The answer to that one lay almost certainly among her private papers that I was reluctant to explore. I could stall a little longer, sit a little longer by the fire thinking of the girl that I already knew so much about: thinking, too, about my brother Bill. . . .

Bill had got rather English in the five years he had been away from home, I think, or perhaps he had been lonely. At home I don't think he would have made a pet of a mongrel dog like Dev, short for de Valera. Dev was an Irish terrier by courtesy that had strayed into their camp one day. He had adopted Bill, and then he had adopted Janet, too.

They had Dev in the boat with them on that day when I first met her when we went round from Lymington to Keyhaven. He sat up in the bow looking out forward, ears pricked, obviously enjoying his trip. Janet said, explaining him to me. "He's such a fool you can't help liking him."

When we reached Keyhaven, Janet brought the boat alongside a tumble-down jetty, and we went ashore. We had brought lunch with us from the hotel, and three bottles of beer. As we ate she said curiously, "Bill told me you were at Oxford before the war."

I nodded. "I was at the House."

"Are you going back?"

"I don't know. I think I'd like to go back for a bit and take a degree." I glanced at her. "And you?"

"I was going to try and go to Lady Margaret Hall," she said. "I don't know if I'd have got in. I can't see myself getting in there now. I don't know what I'll do."

Bill laughed. "We'll all get bumped off when the balloon goes up," he said. "Then it'll be decided for us."

A new sort of landing craft came down the Solent. Janet and Bill began to talk about it, and I had leisure to lie quietly on the grass in the warm sun and study her. I wanted to do that because it was pretty clear to me that this girl was to be my sister-in-law. True, they didn't appear to be engaged and she wore no ring, but it was clear that they were very

WHO'S WHO?

A D E H are the clues on page 39 which help to identify the woman on the left as Margot Fonteyn, Britain's first prima ballerina assoluta.

B C F G are the clues which identify the woman on the right as Shirley Abicair, Australian star of radio and television.

much in love. When they had more time for personal affairs, they would almost certainly become engaged, and they might marry before the war was over.

My mother would want to know what the girl was like. She would want my assurance that this girl would make Bill a good wife, and, studying her quietly as she talked to Bill, I felt that I could make my mother happy on that score. Janet would make a good mistress of Coombargana, and a good wife to Bill, and, lying there upon the grass at Keyhaven that day, I thought he was a very lucky man.

I listened unashamedly while she talked to Bill. The dog, Dev, had laid his head upon her knee and she was fondling his ears. "You're very lucky to be able to keep a dog," she said to Bill. "I don't believe the captain would allow one in Mastodon."

Bill nodded. "We wouldn't be allowed dogs if we weren't in such a lonely place. I don't know what'll happen to him when we get moved on."

"Are you likely to be shifted soon?"

"I don't know," he said. "We'll get moved on some day, of course." He looked down thoughtfully at Dev. "You get too fond of a dog, and then you're in trouble when you get moved to a place where you can't have one."

"If you're stuck, I might be able to get Mummy to have him. If Daddy's home, I think he might quite like him."

"I thought your father was in Oxford all the time," he remarked.

She turned to him, fresh and animated. "Oh, I forgot—I haven't told you. There was a letter waiting when I got back on board last night. Daddy's probably going on the party."

He stared at her. "Not this party?"

"This party," she told him, laughing. "He's gatecrashed it. When the balloon goes up, Daddy goes, too."

"But what's he going as?"

"Aircraft identifier in a merchant ship," she told him.

I got up on one elbow. "How old is he?" I asked.

"About sixty-three, I think," she said. "He seems to think that doesn't matter. I think it's the funniest thing ever."

"It's a good show," said Bill. "A good show for a man of sixty-three."

We went on chatting about Service matters most of the afternoon. At about four o'clock we made a move. We rounded up Dev from some rabbit holes and got him into the boat, and made our way round to the Lymington river and so back to the quay.

I said goodbye to Janet Prentice then, because she had to take the boat back up the river before meeting Bill again to spend the evening with him. "It's been a grand day," I said. "The best I've had for years."

She laughed. "Goodbye, sir," she said. "Don't go and prang yourself on the way back to London."

"I take that as an insult," I said, laughing. The "sir" to my uniform hurt a little but, after all, she was Bill's girl, not mine. "Goodbye, Janet."

She sheered off from the quay, with Dev still with her in the boat, standing up in the bow and looking forward. Bill and I turned up to the hotel. "Well," he asked presently. "What do you think?"

"I think you're damn lucky," I told him.

"So do I," he said. "Think there'll be an uproar at home?"

I shook my head. "She'll go down all right."

"I think so, too." He hesitated. "You won't say anything about this in your letters. I haven't said a word about it yet, and I shan't, not till it's all buttoned up."

"I won't say anything," I told him. "Let me know when you put out a communiqué, and then I'll write to Mum and say she's okay."

An R.A.F. car was waiting outside the hotel to take me to the aerodrome. I said goodbye to Bill on the pavement. "I don't know when we'll meet again," I said. "I shan't be able to take another day off till the balloon's gone up."

We left it at that, and he went off down the hill to meet his Janet. I stood watching him till he was out of sight.

I can see him now.

I THINK it was only a few days after that that the JU.188 came over Beaulieu. Viola Dawson told me about that when we met in 1950, and May Cunningham, then May Spikins, told me about it, too.

On a Saturday morning at the end of April, the Ordnance officer at Mastodon sent Janet down the river with four boxes of ammunition for the L.C.T.s. The L.C.T.s were lying in pairs all down the river, and half their crews had gone off on weekend leave. Viola Dawson took Janet down and went alongside L.C.T. 968.

The captain came to the rail; he was an R.N.V.R. lieutenant called Craigie. A rating dropped down into the boat and they passed the ammunition boxes up into the tank landing craft. Janet swung herself on board after them.

She'd only just put aboard when there was a sound of firing from the Isle of Wight. Craigie and Janet turned to look. There was an aircraft there, quite low down, flying more or less towards them, and there were little puffs of smoke all round it.

For a moment they stood staring, unable to believe the evidence of their eyes. It was many months since the Germans had done anything like this. Then Craigie shouted: "Enemy aircraft over! Anti-aircraft stations!" And men came tumbling out on deck.

On the L.C.T. beside them, the sub-lieutenant and several ratings came out and looked with interest at the aeroplane. Janet, furious at their slowness, said: "That's a German. Better man those Oerlikons."

The sub looked at her helplessly. "Can't. Both gunners are on leave."

The girl said: "My God!" and slipped over the rail on to the other

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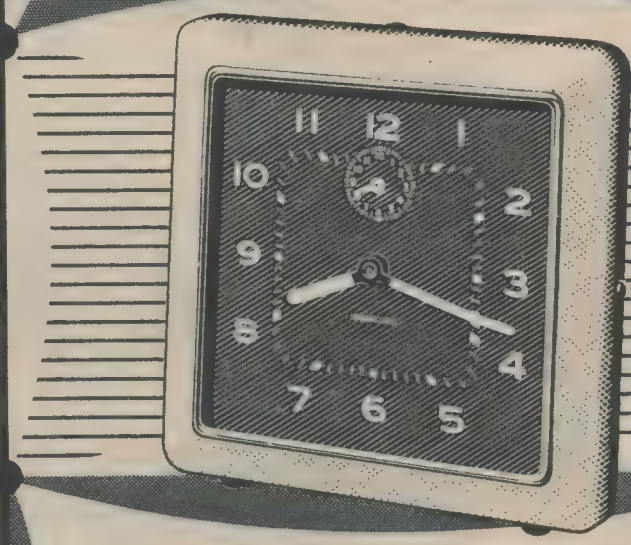

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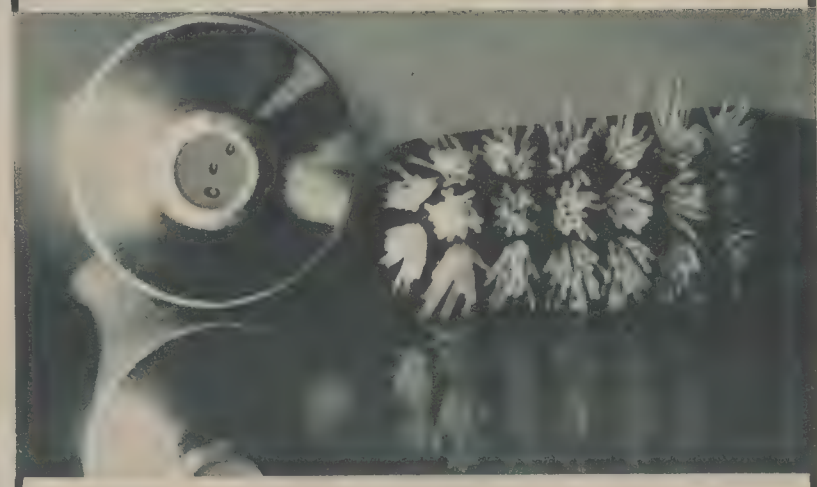

What is it? All who guessed "a toothbrush" . . . 5 marks. Another 3 marks for "tube of toothpaste." But, to get 10 out of 10, you need to see what the camera doesn't show you—the toothpaste isn't white—it's RED!

Yes, deep, rich ruby-RED. "Five out of Seven" use a toothbrush, of course, but soon 5 out of 7 will be putting RED toothpaste on it. For more and more of the modern-minded are switching to it every day. Five years ago, red toothpaste was a novelty from France and America; today it has "arrived."

It used to be expensive to get the benefit of the latest discovery in toothpaste manufacture. But not any more. In fact, it's *cheaper* now. "Less Toothpaste" (one of the ruby-reds) is only 1/7½d; and, as you use only half as much as of the older type pastes, it's really most economical. (That's why it's called "Less.")

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Haven't you "gone red" yet? Oh, come now—don't admit it! Let's be up to date at all costs!

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ship. Behind her, Craigie roared: "Okay, Janet—you take the port gun and I'll take the starboard!" The inner guns of both ships were practically useless, their field of fire blanked off by the other ship.

At the gun, Janet pulled the cocking lever and slipped the heavy drum in place with quick, experienced hands; she released the securing catch and put her shoulders in the hoops. Behind her someone strained the strap across her back. She swung the gun at the approaching aircraft, but it was turning away. She stood watching it in disappointment, and called across to Craigie: "Everything all right on your side, sir?"

He called back to her: "All okay here, but I'm afraid we've lost him." The aircraft was flying westwards over the middle of the Solent now, a heavy, black, twin-engined thing; they could see the white cross upon the fuselage. One or two ships were firing at long range, and a Bofors from a cliff top to the east of Yarmouth.

She called across to Craigie: "What sort is it?"

Craigie replied: "A Junkers 188."

"What's he up to?"

"Making a survey, I suppose. Photographing everything he can. He's got a bloody nerve."

The aircraft began turning towards the north. It went on turning, and now it was flying more or less towards them from the south-west. From behind her, Craigie called: "I shall be blanked out by monkey's island in a minute. It's all yours, Janet."

The Junkers was not more than a thousand feet up now, and coming straight towards them, a beautiful, copy-book example of a sitting shot. She had it fixed below the centre of her sight exactly as she wanted it, she swung her body slowly, waiting for it, savouring the moment. It was impossible that she could miss; she felt too confident. She pressed the grip and opened fire, and the gun started beating rhythmically, and the smoke of cordite and burned grease was all around her. She swung her body down slowly till she was crouching almost on her knees, holding it exactly as it should be in the sight.

As she fired, the wheels came down; she knew that something had happened, but it meant nothing to her. She went on firing, and the glass and plastic nose of the cabin shattered, and three bright stars appeared inside the cabin quickly in succession. The Junkers reared up and passed right over the L.C.T.s in a steep climb; she scrambled round with the gun to get it on a reverse bearing, but now her own ship blanked her fire.

She swung her body to the side to look round the obstruction, and saw it again. A Bofors from the shore opened up on it as it passed from the river marshes over land. Then it stalled with full power on and fell into a dive, and as it fell a Bofors blew its fin off. It plunged steeply into a field near the marshes and crashed with a great thud, and a whoof, and a towering pillar of flame, and a huge cloud of black smoke.

JANET stood trembling in the harness of the Oerlikon, appalled at the sight. Around her, men were clamouring and shouting. By her side, Craigie cried: "Good show, Janet! I bet you're the only Wren who's ever done that!"

She said stupidly: "Did I do it?"

"Of course you did. You got three direct hits in the pilot's cockpit. It was marvellous shooting." He stood looking over to the fields in front of Mastodon where a little black smoke was still eddying up. "I'm going on shore to have a look at it," he said. "Like to come?"

An awful fascination seized her; she would have to go. She said: "Yes, please."

The Junkers had spread itself all over the field. It bore no resemblance to an aeroplane at all. When Janet and Craigie arrived, a number of soldiers were already there; under the directions of an officer, they were

"What sort of a dog collar?"

gathering up the bodies. There seemed to be a great many of them.

Craigie went up to the subaltern and asked: "How many were in it?"

"Seven."

"Seven? I thought the Junkers 188 had a crew of four."

"So did I. They must have been sitting on each other's knees."

They did not stay for long. Janet went back to the tank landing craft, and carried on with her job. She returned to Mastodon for dinner.

SHE was working in the ordnance store after dinner when her Wren officer telephoned down to tell her the captain wanted to see her. Twenty minutes later she was shown into the captain's office. There was an R.A.F. officer, a flight lieutenant, sitting beside him.

"Leading Wren Prentice," said the R.N. officer, "I understand that you shot down a German aeroplane this morning."

"I shot at it and hit it, sir," she said. "Other people hit it, too. I don't know if I was the one to shoot it down."

"Lieutenant Craigie tells me that you hit it first," he said. "Tell me, why did you fire at it at all? It's not your job. You're not part of an operational unit."

She was taken aback. "There were no gunners on 702, sir. It seemed the right thing to do, that somebody should man the guns."

"I see." He paused, and then he said: "You can stand easy, Prentice. Sit down."

She did so, and the flight lieutenant leaned forward. He was an intelligence officer from Beaulieu aerodrome. "The army say that at about the time you started firing the machine put its wheels down," he said.

She hesitated. "I think it did."

"You're not sure?"

"I remember noticing the wheels were down after it passed over."

"Did you go on firing after you saw the wheels come down?"

She said: "Yes, I think I did."

"Do you know what it means when an enemy aeroplane puts its wheels down?"

She had a vague idea. "Does it mean that he wants to surrender?"

"That's generally the meaning. In a case like this it's difficult to judge. I'm not blaming you, Miss Prentice. I've just got to establish the facts, whether the Junkers was making a motion for surrender or not."

She said unhappily: "A lot of other people were firing at it after the wheels went down, after it passed over us."

"I know. We don't know for certain that you were responsible for its destruction. The trouble is that we now think that the machine was trying to find an aerodrome and make a peaceful landing. There were seven

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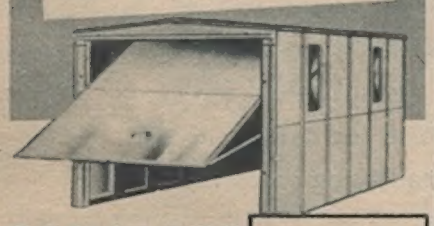

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(3370)

OH, JOHNNY! — by TIM

men in a machine with seats for four, and their paybooks show they were all Poles or Czechs. They may have stolen the Junkers to fly it over here and surrender."

He turned to the naval captain: "That's all I wanted to establish, sir, whether the wheels came down before this Wren began firing, or afterwards. I think it probably *was* trying to land, but who's to say?"

"No more questions for this young lady?"

"No, sir."

Janet stood up. The captain said: "Well, I'm not going to take any disciplinary action, Leading Wren Prentice. I don't blame you for acting as you did. But remember this in the future. You've not been trained for operations, and you don't know operations. You have absolutely no right to fire any gun against the enemy, because in doing so you may make very serious mistakes. That's all. You may go now."

She went back to her hut to change back into working-clothes, dazed and unhappy. Normally, she would have seen Bill next day, which was a Sunday, but Bill was not available. She had the weekend alone to brood.

"She took it badly," May Cunningham told me, years afterwards. "She got it fixed firm in her mind that they were on our side, and that she'd killed them. She didn't cry or anything. Might have been better if she had. She just carried on, but she got very quiet—hardly talked at all. It's a pity her boy friend—your brother—it's a pity he wasn't around so she could talk it over with him."

LOOKING through her documents at Coombargana, ten years later, I found a letter, dated April 29, 1944. I think that date was the same Saturday on which she shot down the Junkers, and so she would have got this letter on the Monday morning after her weekend of troubled thought about the crash.

It was from her father, and it read:

Dear Janet,

We are at the Royal Bath Hotel in Bournemouth not very far from you. I cannot leave here, but could you get over to see me one night and have dinner with me in the mess?

I am terribly glad to have got this job, because I missed the last war, you know. I was afraid I would be too old, but there are several older than me on this course. The medical officer has his surgery on the top floor of a seven-storey building near here, and there is no lift. If you can get up the stairs to see him, he passes you as fit.

After this week I go to some port, to join a ship; there won't be any leave. We are so close; do come over if they will let you.

Daddy.

She went over to see her father one evening that week. The visit made a deep impression on her, and probably took her mind off her own troubles, for she talked a lot about it, to Viola Dawson and to May Spikins, and they told me six years later what they could remember.

She got to the Royal Bath Hotel at about six o'clock. Her father was in the lobby, and he came forward to meet her with the enthusiasm of a boy. She kissed him, and stepped back to look at him. He was no longer the father she had known, the poor old man in Oxford, harassed by overwork. He was clear-eyed, confident.

She said: "Daddy, you look fine! Are you enjoying it?"

He laughed. "It's pretty hard work. There's a lot to learn."

HE was rated, she found, as a petty officer in the navy. She went rather shyly and dined with him in his mess, sitting at long tables with a couple of hundred men; she was the only girl. Most of these men were over fifty and some of them were very old indeed.

She had wanted to talk to her father about the Junkers, to unload on to him some of the trouble she was in. As the evening went on, however, she got less and less opportunity. Her father's mind was set entirely upon aircraft identification, and he listened absently when she told him of her work. She had not got the heart to spoil his pleasure with her own troubles.

There was nothing he could do to help her, nothing to be gained from telling him about it now. It would only distress him and spoil the glamour he was living in. He had put off all personal cares and left them with his wife in his home in Oxford. Mentally, he was stripped now for the fight; he would not see her mother again till he had done his stuff and "Overlord" was over. She could not break in now and load him up with her troubles. It wouldn't be fair.

At ten o'clock she left and he came to the steps of the hotel to see her off. As she kissed him goodbye, she felt glad that she had not told her father of the Junkers, and said so to Viola Dawson that night as they went to bed. I think she must have been looking forward very much to talking it all over with Bill.

As a matter of fact, I doubt if she did so. I don't think she ever met Bill again. He came back from his weekend job and was at Cliffe Farm for about two days; it is just possible she might have met him then, though it was in the middle of a working week. Then he went off to join a party setting out from Gosport in an M.T.B.

He was drowned on the night of May 5, at Le Tirage, in Normandy, exactly a month before "Overlord."

To be continued next week

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INCREASED PRIZES VALUE OVER £1,200 THIS WEEK!

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RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in "*Bullets Bulletin* dated March 19 and in JOHN BULL dated March 26), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, March 12, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,976 result.)

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